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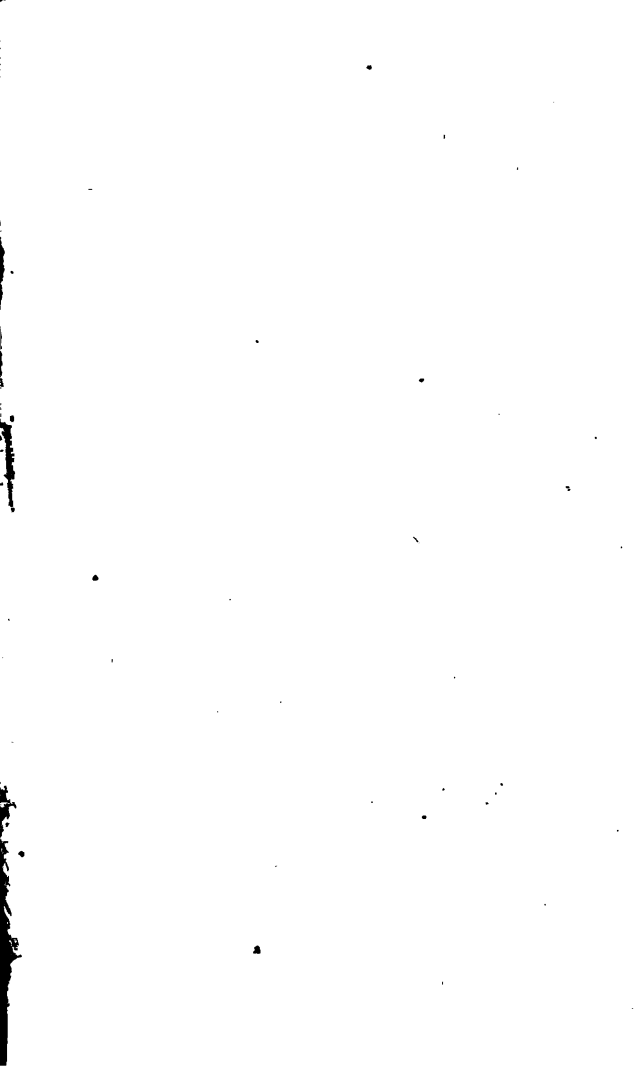
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10
HAPPINESS;

A TALE,

FOR

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THE GRAVE AND THE GAY.

BOSTON:

"Quod petis hic est."—*Horace*.

"Seria cum possim, quod delectantia malim
Scribere, tu causa es lector."—*Martial*.

"Così à l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso:
Succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E da l'inganno suo vita receve."—*Tasso*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:

SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG AND CROCKER & BREWSTER.

NEW YORK:—JOHN P. HAVEN.

1822.

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KP 583

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HAPPINESS.

CHAPTER I.

" — I have flaunted in the sun, and cast
My smiles in prodigality away ;
And now, and now—no matter. I have done—
Whether I live scorn'd or belov'd."—*Barry Cornwall.*

" Oh, blessed, blessed company,
When men and heavenly spirits greet,
And they whom death had severed meet,
And hold again communion sweet,
Oh, blessed, blessed company."—*Southey.*

THE remaining page of Julia Wilmington's sad history is a brief one. After writing the letter, which in detached paragraphs we have already laid before our readers, she returned, with apparent interest, to the occupations, which, till the late unhappy event, had always afforded her delight. She visited the cottages of the poor, administered especially to the comfort of the sick, and superintended a school which owed its existence to her bounty. All allusions to her faithless lover were studiously avoided by her friends, and she herself never once adverted to

the past. The struggle which she maintained with her heart was so secret, that none suspected its violence; she never

" ————— spoke

To any one upon her cruel lot
You would have deem'd that he had been forgot,
Or thought her bosom callous to the stroke;
But on her cheek there was one hectic spot,
'Twas little, but it told her heart was broke."

As the Evelyns were about to take a journey into Devonshire to spend a few months in a circle of endeared and happy friends, Mrs. Wilmington yielded to their solicitations, that her daughter might accompany them, hoping, that change of scene would enliven her spirits, and give once more, the bloom of health to her languid countenance.

In this pleasing anticipation, however, she was disappointed. The malady was in the heart, and was inveterate. Mr. Evelyn, alarmed at the rapidly increasing symptoms of a disorder which baffled all medical skill, returned with her to Hampshire, and learning that Mrs. Wilmington was in the Isle of Wight, he crossed over from Beaulieu with the invalid to place her under the tender and judicious care of her mother.

It was at this interesting period, that Louisa Delaval was introduced to Julia, and having learnt her affecting story, she felt, towards her, all the fondness of sisterly affection. Her delicate and unwearied attentions won upon the lovely sufferer, and the attachment soon became reciprocal.

Mr. Evelyn, venerable in wisdom—Mrs. Wilmington, heroic in suffering—and Julia, young and fair, breathing the pure spirit of devotion, and shedding its divine glories around her fading loveliness, filled the imagination, and powerfully impressed the heart of Louisa. They presented a scene, at once awful and attractive. To live and die with beings so illustrious in virtue, and whose sublime destiny was written on their characters, was the first wish of her heart. But, the contrast between herself and them appeared to be so great, that she felt the indulgence of such a wish to be the highest presumption. Yet she admired, she loved their excellencies. “If there be a paradise on earth,” she exclaimed, “it is here. Yes! these individuals, chastened by affliction, and in the hallowed seclusion from the world, which genuine religion prefers, are indeed to be envied. Their sufferings are severe; yet are they light, and but for a moment, and their mysterious dispensation of trial is conducting them to “an eternal weight of glory.” Like their divine Master, they are rising to their Father’s throne by the rugged and steep ascent of sorrow. Here Christianity proves itself divine. As the radiant beauty of an angel proclaims his celestial origin, so religion, in thus forming and elevating the human character, bears its own evidence, and is a constant witness for itself. I can doubt no more.”

It is thus, in truth, that *practical* Christianity, the Christianity not of forms and creeds, but of character, usually subdues all prejudice, and silences all cavils. Thus it tramples on the mightiest opposition; and were it uniformly

presented to mankind thus unsullied in its supreme and beatifying glory, it would captivate all hearts. Alas! the inconsistencies, the worldliness, and the hypocrisy of Christians, have rendered written argumentative treatises to establish the truth of the Gospel necessary; and incontrovertible as these treatises are, they fail to convince, because the all persuading evidence of a devout and holy life in the members of the Christian church is asked for in vain. This alone would more than satisfy the most captious infidelity; and this withheld, credulity itself begins to doubt and to dispute.

How Miss Delaval was affected by the trying, yet glorious scenes, she was called to witness in the family of Mrs. Wilmington, will appear from the following letters addressed to Emily, with whom she had continued to correspond after her marriage, and of whose harsh and cruel treatment by her worthless husband she had frequently heard from their mutual friends, though Mrs. Dormer had never directly adverted to the subject, and had given no indication of being unhappy, except that she wrote with less vivacity, and in a style of unusual seriousness. A fact, however, of grievous notoriety, having transpired, Emily could no longer refrain, but poured her sorrows into the bosom of her sympathising friend. She was constrained to admit, that Dormer had been wounded in a duel occasioned by the exposure of an intrigue, accompanied with circumstances of peculiar baseness. To this communication Louisa immediately replied in the following terms :

LOUISA TO MRS. DORMER.

“ MY DEAREST EMILY,

“ To me there is something peculiarly affecting in *your* sorrow. No common calamity could have depressed your spirits. The tone of sadness, so foreign to your nature, which pervades your recent letters, convinces me that you must have been the object of systematic injustice and cruelty. Alas! that so much baseness should lurk under so much gaiety, and that an apparent good temper should be the veil to cover so much detestable wickedness. I am more than ever of opinion, that fashionable profligacy has no redeeming qualities; that it is a moral pest, which blights and withers whatever it touches, and taints the very atmosphere in which it breathes; and I grieve, my dearest friend, that it has so soon poisoned all your comfort. It is in vain to regret the past; but while the gay and thoughtless were fatiguing you with heartless congratulations on your marriage, I wept in secret. Even Sir George, who is very lenient towards the vices of his own sex, expressed his deep sorrow, that you were united for life to one who could never love you, and who sooner or later would certainly sacrifice your happiness. Unwilling, however, to forebode the worst, I suffered my imagination to dwell on your beauty, the sweetness of your disposition, and the indescribable charm of your manners. These I was anxious to believe would reclaim even Dormer. How have I been mistaken! An angel cannot win a

profligate back to virtue. The most lovely of our sex seem doomed to be the victims of the most depraved of the other. We are all too credulous, too unsuspicious. Fatal snares surround our feet from the first moment that we enter upon the world, and we are unconscious of danger. Too frequently we are even accessory to the ruin which threatens us. We prefer a fine person to fine principles, and are captivated by what is agreeable rather than by what is good. Elegant accomplishments, set off with unhesitating assurance, will win the heart that genuine worth, diffident and distant, would give the world to gain. Those who will act the part of lovers, are far more successful than those whose characters they affect to personate. We judge by appearance only, and are therefore betrayed. When to beauty of person is added an indefinite number of golden charms, our perils are increased in exact proportion with the ideas generally entertained of our wealth. And if a reference to Doctors' Commons by some dying swain confirms these ideas, and renders the speculation a good one, the siege is carried on by stratagem or force, till the citadel yields, and the spoils are taken.

“ Poor frail, confiding woman, seems destined to be the sport of caprice, or the victim of credulity. Before marriage we are idols, and afterwards we are miserable slaves. It is high time that we should begin to assert the prerogatives of human nature; and as the institutions of religion and society are favourable to our independence, we ought to be no longer the dupes of villainy, or the creatures of passion. The

weakness of a delicate frame, is the only weakness which naturally belongs to our sex. It is our own fault, if the lords of the creation convert their lawful rule into tyranny. Wise and virtuous men will never abuse their authority over us. Such only are qualified to be husbands. When a lover betrays deficiency of understanding, with moral perversion of heart, we ought to consider ourselves insulted by his addresses, and promptly to dismiss him to the gaming-house and the stable, the race-course and the lobby.

“But matrimony, at the best, is a leap in the dark, unless the light of religion irradiate, and its upholding power sustain us in the descent.

“In reference to this most important union, religion possesses two great advantages : it furnishes motives, and qualifies us to discharge the duties which it demands ; while it prepares us to meet, and enables us to overcome the evils with which it sometimes infests our path. Love may for a season possess more energy than principle ; but it will want its uniformity and steadiness. The passions are short-lived and capricious. Religion alone can sober the violence of attachment, and by moderating its excess, ensure its permanence. Mere love prescribes no duties, and what it performs, in promoting the happiness of its object, arises from instinctive gratification rather than from the motives which constitute the elements of virtue. Friendship is an important succedaneum to love. But that too may fail ; for it supposes reciprocal virtues as the basis on which it rests, and when these are gone, the superstructure falls to the ground. But it is religion that remains with us—the un-

dying principle of kindness and of duty, when love and friendship are both departed. It is very well for amatory poets to talk in their bewitching strains, of

‘Hearts never changing, and brows never cold.’

And there may be a few happy instances, where the union of many years, is more than the feeling of habit, the tie of offspring, and the creature of circumstances. Some such felicitous phenomena may have occurred where true piety has been unknown, in the long course of a thousand years; but it is madness for any to expect to add their own example to the number. Hearts must be linked in a ‘heavenly tie;’ understanding the phrase in its true and proper, and not in its mere poetical sense, or they will soon regret the compact which only professed to make them one. The chain which holds them will be the iron bond of destiny, corroding and wounding its unwilling prisoners; and not the golden, delightful one of choice, which is at once their pride and their ornament.

“And if religion be necessary to fit us for the duties of married life, how much more is its aid required, to dispose us to bear the cruel ills of disappointment, arising from the alienation and worthlessness of him who has robbed us of our peace?”

“A youthful, lovely, and high-spirited woman, neglected, undervalued, or insulted by her husband, stands on the edge of a precipice, and is surrounded with perils. Accomplished and insinuating hypocrites are lurking in her path, to

obtrude their regrets, and to offer their sympathy. Wounded pride may induce her to permit their approaches, hoping to alarm the fears of a wretch who does not love her sufficiently to care about her virtue—a coquettish vanity may dispose her to play with admiration now that she has outlived affection ; or, she may be inclined to plunge into dissipation to relieve herself from the chagrin which devours her heart. In either case, she is not far from destruction. To be reckless of character is to take the first step towards our own ruin. The chariest wife that is, thus circumstanced, will not wholly escape suspicion. The tongue of calumny will busy itself with her reputation. Levity will be imputed where there has been no more than harmless gaiety. The slanderer will thus prepare the way for the seducer. The unoffending persecuted creature, will throw herself, with heedless desperation, into the arms that are opened, with apparent fondness, to shield her from a cruel and detested world ; and at last, guilt has to brave the reproaches which even innocence could not endure. O, my Emily, what can guard a woman for whom such snares are laid, who at home feels nothing but desolation, and abroad, abandoned by her natural protector, has to encounter a thousand insidious, smiling, and remorseless enemies ? Alas ! she has no refuge but God—no solace but piety—no security but in the employments of benevolence, humanity, and virtue.

“ The other day I heard a venerable preacher of the Scottish church, discourse on the character of Ruth ; and he closed a most impressive

sermon with this admirable peroration, addressed, I had almost said, to me :

“ ‘ Young woman ! Whatever thy condition may be ; whether thou art in thy father’s house, or married to an husband ; at home, or in a strange land ; in society, or solitude ; followed or neglected ; be this thy monitor, this thy guide, this thy refuge—‘ the love of God shed abroad in thy heart,’—‘ the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom,’—‘ the peace of God which passeth all understanding.’ However easy, gentle, complying in other respects, where your religious principles—where the testimony of a good conscience—where your duty to your Creator are concerned, ‘ be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.’ Thus shall youth be guarded, and beauty adorned ; thus shall society be sweetened, and solitude cheered ; thus shall prosperity be sanctified, and adversity soothed ; thus shall life, even to old age and decay, be rendered useful and respectable ; and thus shall death and the grave be stripped of all their terrors.’

“ The guidance and support of such piety as this, you, my Emily, will greatly need in your present distressed situation. I am glad to hear, that the wound is not likely to prove fatal, though I burn with indignation when I think of the circumstances which led to its infliction. So soon after marriage to intrigue with the wife of his friend, and shamelessly to neglect and insult the most lovely of her sex ! But, my dear Emily, be patient, and even dutiful. Let a dignified virtue triumph over feminine and lacerated feelings. Prove, even to yourself, what

superiority innocence has over crime. Be assured of the sympathy of

“Your ever affectionate

“LOUISA.”

LOUISA TO MRS. DORMER.

“It affords me indescribable pleasure, my dearest Emily, to learn, that you approve of the sentiments conveyed in my last letter, on the subject of your present duty: I knew your heart; I well knew, what it would naturally dictate. An elevated virtue teaches you to subdue the indignation of wounded pride; and you thus prove, that you truly respect yourself. An injured wife ought never to degrade her own character, because she has detected the infidelity of her husband. The difficulties and sorrows of our lot are intended by a gracious Providence to improve our virtue, and to brighten our destiny. If they do not produce this effect, they fall upon us with a double weight. There is no calamity so great as a discontented and rebellious heart, that rises against adversity, and struggles in vain with the irresistible current of painful events. For your own sake, Emily, I regret that you entertain, what appear to me, mistaken views of religion; and that you attach so little importance to principles which I now feel to be indispensable to the right discharge of duty, and the true enjoyment of life. I am, as yet, in my noviciate, and have advanced no farther in the studies of piety than to be deeply persuaded of its infinite worth. Its effi-

cacy I cannot doubt ; for I every day behold it attested in circumstances too impressive to be ever effaced from my heart.

“ Julia Wilmington, the lovely creature with whose sad story I have already made you acquainted, is hastening to the tomb. Thus far I have been her charmed attendant to the confines of immortality, and am hourly expecting to see the angel spirit unrobe, and take its glorious flight. She returned from Sidmouth in a state of excessive debility ; yet she is beautiful in her weakness, and an air of cheerfulness, which she assumes in the presence of her friends, sometimes makes them forget to observe the ravages of disease which are too visible in her delicate and interesting features. Even in the dishabille of a sick chamber (for she is frequently confined to her room) she discovers the innate elegance of her mind. Her person is attired with neat simplicity, and with an evident solicitude not to shock her mother by any marked difference in her appearance. Her very negligence is graceful. The flowers of the season are tastefully arranged before her, as she sits or reclines on her bed, and she amuses herself, at intervals, by delineating, with great accuracy and truth, the delicacy of their forms, and the variety of their tints. These, when finished, she distributes among her friends, accompanying them with some appropriate poetical effusion ; every line of which breathes tenderness. Each of these exquisite performances will be treasured up as an impressive ‘*memento mori*,’ to those whose port-folios they adorn. Though she never murmurs, yet she has seasons of despon-

dency ; under whose saddening influence she one day presented me with a beautiful specimen of the *Gum Cistus*,* to which was annexed, the subjoined expression of momentary gloom :—

FRAIL PLANT ! whose early buds display
Their beauties to the opening day,
And fade with its declining ray,
To bloom no more.

When thy poor scattered leaves I view,
So lately bright with morning dew,
'Neath the green bush on which they grew,
So lowly laid ;

An emblem of myself I see,
When cheerful morning dawned for me ;
But I have droop'd, and died like thee
In sorrows' night.

Yes ! Hope once dwelt within my breast,
Calm were my days, serene and blest ;
While her soft accents whispered rest
For future years.

But, when affliction's chilling night,
Shaded the morn, so fair and bright,
From this sad heart she took her flight,
To those more blest.

Fresh buds the morning will bestow,
The cheering sun again will glow,
And gentle zephyrs round thee blow,
Each changing day,

But Hope again within my breast
Will never find a settled rest,
For in her sad forsaken nest,
Pale sorrow dwells.

* The flowers of this plant blow every morning, and wither at night.

“Over fading flowers she would sometimes hang with fond regret. On an occasion of this kind, she remarked, ‘I often compare myself to these fragile forms; and the precise point of resemblance, which I trace, is not their beauty—(you know I have no such vanity)—but their frailty.’

“Mr. Evelyn observed, that the flower of the field is the consecrated figure of human life employed in the Scriptures. ‘Yes,’ she replied, ‘and it is a very apt and touching similitude. It pleases by its elegance, as much as by its truth. It reminds us of spring, and its loveliness—of autumn, and its decay—of winter, and its ravages. It is beautiful; and its moral is the voice of nature, instructing and impressing the hearts of her children. My trembling frame,’ she continued, ‘shrinks before the blast; and with these summer flowers I shall vanish. They will return, and their fragrant loveliness will be hailed with delight; but I shall be seen no more.’

“This was not uttered in a tone of despondency. It was the language of calm conviction. Her own heart was prepared for the event, which she anticipated, and she appeared desirous, that all who loved her should be equally reconciled to it. I ventured to express a hope, that another spring would bring with it health and joy, and that I could not so soon resign the most precious gift of Providence—a friend so dear, and so lately acquired. Oh, my Emily, I shall never forget the ineffable smile with which this angelic creature returned these expressions of my regard. ‘Another spring,’ she replied, ‘will

come, and quicken from the bosom of corruption, the never-withering flowers of Paradise; its genial power will penetrate into the darkest and coldest recesses of the grave; and, touched, resuscitated by its plastic influence, I, with countless myriads, shall merge into light, and beauty, and joy. But, from me, the last spring on earth has taken its flight. Even the harvest is past—the summer is ended; but I do not repine. I ought rather to rejoice. It is a privilege to die. No seed is quickened except it die. I feel within me the conscious principle of immortality—the germ of endless, happy being. Here, it is nipped and chilled. The tempests of life beat cruelly upon it, and it has no refuge but among thorns. In a more congenial clime, it will expand and flourish. I do not always feel the confidence with which I am now sustained. Sometimes I believe and doubt, hope and tremble. Yet ‘I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.’ Natural regret at leaving those I dearly love, I should suspect the truth of my principles if I did not feel. To a Christian, this is all the bitterness there is in death, and even that is sweetened, when I consider, how soon we shall be reunited in that home of the heart, that rapturous scene of social intercourse, where

“Adieu and farewells are a sound unknown,”

“‘I would not form my estimate of heaven by the low measure of human imperfection and frailty; but surely, friendship must survive the

ruins of mortality. Earthly love is of the earth, and must perish. Alas ! it often withers before it blooms, and the bosom that cherished it soon becomes a desolation. But, the communion of saints is an article of my creed ; and knowledge, congeniality, and affection, are necessary to communion. If, in heaven, I am to know patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs, *as such*, then surely, those beloved friends with whom I took sweet counsel upon earth, will not be so changed as to lose their identity ; and, if we retain any thing of our present selves, we must recognize each other, and recognition will be the awakening of the sympathies, and the affections which we cherished here. I have sometimes thought, that the spirits of the just rise in the spiritual heavens, as the beautiful stars of evening break forth at different intervals, and become visible to each other in the material firmament. Perhaps, there is more of fancy than of truth in this notion ; but, last night, when disturbed by the dæman of unrest, I endeavoured to scare him from me by dwelling on this idea, and giving it poetical form and expression.

“ You will not too critically mark its imperfections. I find a sweet relief from the languor of disease in the gentle excitement which such efforts as these produce. I know not how it is ; but, while wearing away to other regions, my memory recalls all the poetical images of my earliest youth, especially those which illustrate the principles, or express the feelings of devotion. Take this trifle, my dearest Louisa, as a memorial of my affection, and as a pledge that we shall meet again—meet to part no more.

METHOUGHT as late I gaz'd, that ev'ry star,
While rising to its nightly space assigned,
Smil'd on its fellow orb a welcome kind,
The friends endear'd, who know and greet afar.

And thus, I said, shall that assembly meet,
Of stars compos'd, and orbs of heaven's own light,
That call'd from earth to move in spheres more bright,
Shall each with other hold communion sweet.

And that alone, methought were bliss ; to greet
The friend of earth, endear'd in heaven ; to prove
While holding converse high with those we love,
That all they promis'd here is there complete :
To claim the twin-horn soul, and mutual find
The faults of earth effac'd and ev'ry charm refin'd.

“ Mr. Evelyn, assisted us to pursue the theme, which, however regarded by some as purely speculative, is yet capable of affording a principle of duty, and a source of consolation, to those who rightly understand it. Emily, how you would love and reverence this venerable and good old man. So much wisdom, blended with so much tenderness, the smile of gay good humour lighting up a face furrowed with the strong marks of age, and frequently rising into the tranquil glory of elevated devotion, (such as, perhaps, illumined the countenance of holy Simeon, when he said, ‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, ’) would not fail to interest your imagination, and to touch your heart with the glow of fervent piety. He is one of the very few whose appearance reminds one of another and a brighter world. There is such a happy consistency in his dress, his language, and his manners, as bespeaks him at once ‘ the minister of grace to guilty men.’ ”

“ I was highly gratified to find, that he entertained the same views which Julia had so sweetly expressed. ‘The bliss of the future state,’ he observed, ‘derived from one infinite source, will be perfect through whatever medium it is communicated; and that it will flow through various channels we cannot reasonably doubt. The nature of man is not more intellectual than it is social; and though in heaven it will survive under new and inconceivable forms of being, it will not lose one of its essential characteristics. The mutual relations of souls may subsist in a state of separation from material existence; and the scriptures lead us to infer, though they do not directly assert, that these relations will continue after the dissolution of the body; and that when the body is raised, and the mortal puts on immortality, they will become more intimate, yet altogether free from the debasement of passion, and the grossness of sensual nature. Every attachment, founded alone upon the principles and feelings which belong exclusively to earth, will of course perish in the universal wreck of matter; for in heaven ‘they neither marry nor are given in marriage;’ the ties arising merely from consanguinity, the stroke of death dissolves. But Christian friendship, the union of spirits, which is the effect of their mutual purity and glorious destination, shall remain when the earth and the visible heavens are no more.’

“ Julia, musing, and, as if touched with some momentary pang, asked, rather doubtingly whether regret for the absence of those we loved on earth, would not impair the felicity of a future state—whether, on the principle assumed, pa-

rents and children, husbands and wives, would not feel severe anguish when they sought in vain for the members of their respective families?

“ ‘That regret, such regret as is injurious to our happiness, can have no place in heaven,’ replied Mr. Evelyn, ‘is most clearly asserted in the scriptures. *‘Sighing, as well as sorrow, shall for ever flee away.’* All the good of the present state will enrich and gladden the future; but all its weakness and imperfections shall be buried in the tomb, to rise no more for ever. To meet our beloved relatives will inspire us with the most heartfelt joy, not because they were branches of *our* family, but because they were members of the ‘family in heaven,’ with whom we lived in a state of probation on terms of intimate, holy, and delightful communion. The perfect spirit, expanded with divine knowledge, and purified by infinite love, will feel its disenthralment from impiety and sin, a privilege; and will rejoice in its emancipation from every object, and every being, that hindered its ascent, and stayed its progress towards its ultimate and destined reward. To our present apprehensions this may seem to be impossible; but, in the Apocalypse, the redeemed are described as expressing devout acquiescence in the judgments of the Almighty, when inflicted with infinite severity on all the *kindreds* of the earth. ‘Even so, Amen.’

“ ‘It is certain,’ continued Mr. Evelyn, after a little pause, ‘that this view of the happiness of heaven, if devoutly cherished, will elevate hu-

man friendship, and greatly augment the satisfactions which it imparts in the present state. I love, if possible, to mingle heaven with all the good I enjoy upon earth. It is natural to wish, that all our fabrics of happiness were built with the elements of eternity ; we are called to high purposes ; human friendships are of little value, if they serve not to kindle in us a desire for immortality ; and, without doubt, they are given us for that end ; and, in promoting this design, they cannot fail, if we persuade ourselves that they are to last for ever. Thus, our best feelings, and most exquisite social enjoyments, are enlisted on the side of religion, and are, at the same time, purified and perpetuated by its hallowed influence. Piety must be the basis of all that is good in the present life ; or, that good, debased by the corruption of human nature, will rather aggravate our misery, when, if rightly improved, it would greatly advance our happiness.

“ Thus too am I reconciled to those bereavements which so often render the heart desolate. This cheering doctrine assures me, that I have sustained no loss. I may fondly deck the grave of those I love, and bedew the urn of friendship with nature's tears ; but I must not seek the living among the dead. I am warned not to yield to the king of terrors a conquest he never gained. The separation which I deplore, is but for a moment ; and I feel, that death has no bitterness, because he cannot divide those who are dear to each other.’

“ Having offered these remarks, and presented a solemn and most fervent prayer to the

throne of mercy, Mr. Evelyn took his leave. According to a previous arrangement with Mrs. Wilmington, I remained, to spend the night in the chamber of Julia; and, on this occasion, a circumstance took place which surprised and delighted me. After the family had all gone to rest, and about three hours of silence had transpired, in which I hoped, that my suffering charge had enjoyed refreshing sleep, she gently raised her head to ascertain whether I slumbered, and perceiving that I was awake, she requested me to write after her dictation. I took my pen accordingly, and *without a single pause, or the alteration of a line, or even a word*, she poured fourth the following strains. You will not wonder, that they greatly affected me.

A PRISONER on the couch of pain,
 I sigh for rosy health in vain,
 And count the moments as they fly
 On slow and heavy pinions by.
 When ev'ning casts her shades around,
 And nature's tears bedew the ground,
 I long to see the morning beam
 In eastern skies refulgent gleam;
 For, surely then, that rosy ray,
 Methinks, will chase my pains away,
 And health and ease in concert rise
 With those glad beams that light the skies.
 Thus, hope, with her bewitching pow'r,
 Beguiles the tedious midnight hour;
 While, wakeful on my restless bed,
 I turn my feverish aching head,
 And watch the taper's sickly ray
 Around my silent chamber play;
 Or listen to the sullen roar
 Of winds that sweep my casement o'er.
 Should but my sleep my eyelids close,
 How different is the short repose,
 From that the gentle pow'r bestow'd
 When health's celestial blossom glow'd.

Fantastic visions, false and vain,
Employ my feverish dreaming brain,
And scenes more wild appear to view
Than ever wakeful fancy drew.
I seem on some rude billow tost,
Each partner of my voyage lost ;
Or, from some mountain's craggy steep,
Plunge headlong in the briny deep.
I mourn some lov'd companion gone,
Or wander in a wild unknown ;
Where ev'ry magic object round
Proclaims the spot enchanted ground.
Then, with some peril near at hand,
I burst the drowsy god's soft band,
And make the sad exchange again,
From fancied wo to real pain.
With throbbing heart and anxious eye,
I watch once more the eastern sky,
To see, if yet the roseate ray
Beepeaks the glad approach of day.
In vain I look—'tis cover'd all
With nature's black funereal pall.
Save where some solitary star
Just sheds her silvery beams afar,
And lightly paints its sombre breast
As slowly she retires to rest.
At length, day's harbingers appear,
To show Aurora's chariot near,
And scatter roses in the skies,
Where first her golden car shall rise.
The lovely and long wish'd-for sight
Sheds through my heart a soft delight ;
And, as I gaze, one pensive smile
Plays faintly on my cheek the while ;
But, soon unbidden sorrows stray,
And wash that short-liv'd smile away.
For something whispers to my heart,
No change can day to me impart :
As much a pris'ner I must lie
As when dark midnight veils the sky.
Ah ! 'twas not thus I us'd to greet
The morn with gratulations sweet,
When, springing from my couch of rest,
Blythe as the sky-lark from her nest,
I fill'd with songs the mountain air,
As gay as any warbler there ;

And search'd to twine a morning wreath,
The mountain's brow, the valley's heath;
And call'd each flow'ret of the spring,
Its tributary aid to bring;
For well, by Flora taught, I know
Where, fresh, the early violets blow,
And where the cowslips first unfold
Their graceful bells of soften'd gold.
The mountain-rose, of stately mien,
Fit empress of the rural scene,
The woodbine and the hawthorn tree,
Are all alike well known to me.
Oh! with what rapture should I trace
Once more each lovely scene they grace;
Where, mem'ry every spot endears,
From infancy's first dawning years.
With what delight should I inhale
Once more the fresh salubrious gale,
And feel it on my temples play,
Chasing their fev'rish heat away.
Yet, if the gale must never pour
Its balmy fragrance on me more;
But only in soft murmurs sigh
O'er the green bed where low I lie;
If spring's wild flow'rets may not be
E'er woven in a wreath by me,
But only deck with fading bloom,
My silent and unhonor'd tomb;—
Almighty ruler of the sky!
Prepare me for those realms on high;
To which the brightest earthly scene,
Is dark, contemptible, and mean.
Then, with what rapture shall I rove
O'er realms of blessedness and love,
And gather amaranthine flow'rs
That deck the fair immortal bowers;
There none shall evermore complain
Of sickness, sorrow, grief, or pain;
And one unfading spring shall bloom,
No more to yield to winter's gloom;
For God himself for ever reigns
The sun of those celestial plains.

“ In my days of thoughtless gaiety, you well remember, that I felt instinctive aversion to a

sick chamber ; and the appearance of a clergyman, in such circumstances, inspired me with terror. I always viewed him as the messenger of sorrowful tidings—as the precursor of death, and of death I was conscious of an indefinite and agonizing dread. But, the scenes which I have now described, have completely vanquished all those feelings. I no longer shrink from the narrow horizon which divides time from eternity. Death not only ceases to be a thing of strange and disquieting consideration, but I have learnt to hold with it high and solemn communion. I have felt more real satisfaction in objects which were once so revolting to my heart, than I ever knew when I was the votary of a world, where ‘ the hand of joy is ever at his lips bidding adieu.’ For the present, my dear Emily, Farewell.

“ Your ever affectionate

“ LOUISA.”

CHAPTER II.

“ Solemn councils ; images of awe ;
Truths, which eternity lets fall on man.”—*Young.*

LOUISA TO MRS. DORMER.

“ WITH pleasure, my dearest Emily, I comply with your request. The interest which you feel in the fate of our poor Julia, may, perhaps,

divert you from your own sorrows; and the principles by which she is sustained and consoled, as she descends, in the very morning of her days, into the grave,

“ Smitten, while all the promises of life
Are opening round her,”

may impart to you something of their divine and blessed influence. I shall, therefore, present you, as they occur, with the incidents which precede and accompany the closing scene.

Last evening, when Mr. Evelyn and myself paid our usual visit, we found her depressed by languor; and, in spite of her efforts to appear cheerful, the big tears would swell out of her eyes, and steal down her cheeks. My heart felt involuntary sympathy, though I was unable to interpret the emotions which so sensibly affected me. Julia, conscious of the painful interest which she had excited in my bosom, intimated, by a gentle pressure of my hand, and a melancholy smile, the thanks she could not speak. We mingled our tears in silence. At length, evidently relieved by indulging what she had in vain struggled to suppress, a serene joy once more beamed in her countenance, like the sun shining through a watery cloud.

“ ‘ Let not what you have witnessed, my dear Louisa,’ she exclaimed, ‘ too much distress you. It is weakness. Joy and sorrow will both shed tears; but mine do not flow from the heart; they have their origin in the nerves. I am unstrung and debilitated. Zephyr whispering through the casement, or the lightest footstep at the door of my chamber, agitates my whole

frame, and I weep, I know not why. But, I am better now; my ministering angels are come, and I must welcome them as they deserve.' Every appearance of gloom soon vanished; and she seemed anxious to draw from Mr. Evelyn his sentiments on subjects which her mind had secretly revolved, and which deeply interested her. However any of us might attempt to divert her attention from her own situation, she invariably led the conversation back to it; she evidently wished to become familiar with death, that in the last struggle, her enemy might be divested of all imaginary terrors. That she should sometimes feel trembling anxiety on the approach of a crisis so alarming to nature; and that she should seek to have her heart sustained by a piety as satisfactory to her reason as it was grateful to her feelings, ought not to excite our surprise.

"It was this, perhaps, which induced her, in reply to some soothing observations of Mr. Evelyn, to advert to certain topics on which her mind was scarcely decided, and concerning which her heart was not perfectly at ease. She confessed, that there were some doctrines of scripture of which she had not a clear apprehension. The universal and total depravity of man; his inability, as a sinner, either to atone for his guilt, or to renovate his heart; his complete redemption, by the incarnation of the Son of God; and his recovery to the divine image, by a system of gracious and heavenly influence emanating from the holy Spirit, were truths, which she not only admitted, but cordially believed and rested upon, as the grand fundamental principles

of revealed religion. But, the decrees of God, involving, as she imagined, the salvation of some, and the reprobation of millions, confounded her understanding, and revolted her feelings. This, she said, she doubted not, arose from the incorrectness of her views on a subject, which, however explained, was awfully mysterious; and from the very harsh and repulsive statements of the doctrine given by those in whose creed it seemed to be the Alpha and Omega. She wished to dismiss it altogether from her mind; but it was too much for her weakness, and notwithstanding her utmost efforts, it often remained to harass and perplex her.

“Mr. Evelyn listened with all the tenderness of a good shepherd to this modest suggestion of doubt, regarding an article of Christian verity; and, with the meekness of wisdom endeavoured to obviate the difficulties which so unhappily disturbed the peace of one for whom he always cherished the affection of a parent.

“You know, my dearest Julia,” he replied, “how little I am accustomed, in the pulpit, to introduce and discuss subjects of doubtful disputation. I have spent my life in directing my pious hearers to *revealed promises*, rather than to *secret purposes*, as the source of their consolation and the ground of their assurance; and, instead of reprobating sinners, my grand aim has been to persuade them, that the Father of Mercies delighteth not in their death, but invites them to turn from their evil ways and live. Yet, as a believer in the New Testament, and as a clergyman of the church of England, I give my unfeigned assent and consent to the doctrine

of predestination ; nor do I consider, that there is the least inconsistency between my preaching and my creed. So that, as you have intimated, the repugnance which you feel to this particular article of our faith, arises from erroneous ideas of its nature.

“ ‘ That, in the heart of the Deity, an eternal purpose has been formed, respecting the salvation of a certain portion of the human race, is a doctrine which, it appears to me, is clearly revealed ; a doctrine, however, which, in many instances, it is to be feared, has been abused—on the one hand, to promote licentiousness ; and, on the other, to produce despair.

“ ‘ Unscriptural notions of ‘ the election of grace,’ have led many to imagine, that the promise of eternal salvation is made to the predestinated, without comprehending the necessary preliminaries of personal renovation, holiness of heart, and actual devotedness, to the service of God. These persons, looking only at the end in which the decree terminates, sever the assurance of future felicity from all the fruits of the spirit, and every trace and feature of a renovated nature, and a regenerate state. They forget, that the same wisdom which has appointed the *end*, has also infallibly determined the *means* by which it shall be accomplished. The preliminaries, which I have mentioned, *form a part of the decree, and are as essential to it as the final result.* All the promises of happiness made in the scriptures, and which certainly emanate from the divine purpose to save, are not made to individuals by name ; but indefinitely to persons answering a specific description. They are, in

every instance, addressed to the penitent, the believing, the obedient, or to some similar specification of character. It is, therefore, the grossest presumption for any to imagine, that they will be saved at last, because they have now persuaded themselves, that they are ordained to eternal life, when they are destitute of the only evidence of their being so ordained, which is the possession of that character which the Gospel delineates as pre-requisite to the enjoyment of its saving benefits. Unless we repent, believe in the Son of God, and become zealous for those good works which alone can flow from good principles, we cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. And, that view of absolute decrees which destroys their connexion with repentance, faith, and holiness, is not only erroneous, but fatal to the hopes of all who presumptuously entertain it.

“ ‘ The other extreme is equally dangerous. Though it operates in a different way, it leads to the same disastrous consequence. On the supposition, that a certain number of the human race are ordained to salvation, many sink into despondency, and infer, that if they are not elected, it is in vain for them to attempt to perform the duties of religion, or to avail themselves of its privileges. Thus they manifest a haughty spirit of insubordination to the revealed will of the Almighty; and affecting to account themselves unworthy of eternal life, cast a dire reflection both upon the wisdom and the mercy of God. They either arrogantly presume to be acquainted with the secret purpose of the di-

vine mind ; or to forbode a result from that purpose for which they are destitute of the slightest warrant. They convert a purpose to save into an intention to destroy ; and, without any evidence but what arises from the perverse depravity of their own hearts, conclude, that they belong to the number of the lost. This conviction effectually closes their minds against impressions favourable to their salvation ; and, under its influence, they contradict the plainest declarations of Scripture, and pertinaciously refuse its most urgent invitations to believe in Christ, and to accept of mercy. They produce, against all the warnings of impending ruin, addressed to their fears, and all the offers of salvation, presented to their hopes, a secret imaginary decree, which has left them without the pale of evangelical provision ; and which renders all their attempts to pass its boundaries a useless, and even a pernicious labour.

“ “ Some, indeed, yet more desperate, superadd, to the doctrine of election, another, from which it is totally distinct ; and which, in the sense it is generally understood, is as repugnant to the divine character, as it is unsupported by the divine word.

“ “ Unconditional election, they say, necessarily implies, unconditional reprobation. A conclusion altogether absurd, and opposed to the whole spirit and tenor of revelation. Man has destroyed himself ; he is the author of his own ruin ; and there is not a pang felt in the universe but strictly accords with the rectitude of justice, and is fully consistent with the tenderness of mercy. If sinners be redeemed, the

grace which restores them, must be unconditional; and all that is implied in salvation, flows from the divine Sovereignty. But, condemnation proceeds upon a different principle. *In every case, it is the act of God, as the righteous governor of the world.* The Almighty has reprobated none but such as reprobate themselves. This tremendous procedure of heaven always implies, on the part of the sufferer, moral and actual delinquency; and delinquency chosen and persisted in till the moment of its infliction, and for ever after. Reprobation, is a decree to punish; but punishment, where there is no guilt, is cruel and detestable injustice. All believing penitents are saved; and only obstinate transgressors are finally condemned. As God is not the author of sin, he cannot be charged as unjust in inflicting its penal consequences; but, as he is the author of grace, the glory of salvation is all his own.

“ ‘That great and perplexing difficulties,’ continued Mr. Evelyn, ‘confound enquiry on this point, when we suffer ourselves to reason without the guidance of the sacred volume, is readily admitted. But, of what doctrine, which is purely a doctrine of revelation, may not this be affirmed? And the inferences which the proud reason of man presumes to draw from this mysterious subject, the scriptures interpose to arrest and condemn. If predestination be viewed by any as determining their fate, irrespective of their personal character, the New Testament forbids the conclusion; and declares, that ‘whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.’”

“ ‘If any argue, that if they are elected, they shall be saved, and if they are not elected, they must perish, the oracles of heaven instantly rebuke the blasphemy by affirming, in the person of the Saviour, ‘All that the Father hath given me, shall come; and *whosoever* cometh, I will in no wise cast out.’ And again, ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.’

“ ‘To those who represent this as a doctrine only suited to the regions of a cruel and desperate fanaticism, I have merely to reply, that the scriptures exhibit it under a totally different aspect, and that the number of the saved is as great on the system which maintains it, as on those by which it is rejected. Whether we admit, or deny, the doctrine of predestination, an infinite multitude will be saved at last, composed of *precisely the same individuals*. Whatever are the sentiments of devout minds on this point, they must invariably admit, that all who repent and believe in Christ, shall be saved; and that all the impenitent and unbelieving, shall perish; and the same is admitted by those who maintain the doctrine of predestination; so that an equal number are saved on either plan.’

“ Here, I could not help remarking, that as the final results were the same, whether the doctrine were affirmed or denied, that I thought a subject of so little importance ought not to be introduced into the pulpit, or into religious treatises, designed to enlighten and impress the ignorant, and the enquiring, especially as it was

so liable to misapprehension, and in weak and uninstructed minds, so likely to produce injurious effects.

“ In this, however, Mr. Evelyn could not fully concur. His reply was judicious, and afforded me the satisfaction I had often sought in vain. For, I confess, that the doctrine in question, up to this period, had been the principal obstacle to my becoming a decided Christian. ‘ I admit,’ said he, ‘ that the subject of predestination ought not to be entered upon without extreme caution, both as to the mode of stating it, and to the persons before whom it is stated; but, I cannot agree with you, that it ought to be altogether omitted; or that, because it is not an essential doctrine of Christianity, that it is not a very important one. That the inspired writers speak of it is undeniable; and that our own church also has made it an article of faith, which all her ministers and members are to receive, is equally certain. On these accounts, we are not to discard it through fear of offending any who may be hostile to it; though, on the other hand, we ought not so frequently, or so strongly to insist upon it as unnecessarily to wound and grieve them. The true medium which a minister should aim at, is to give to this doctrine, as well as to every other, as precisely as possible, that measure of prominence and importance which it bears in the sacred writings. Though not among the first principles of religion, it is still of considerable moment. It ought to be believed, and in order to its being believed, it should be explained and enforced.

“ ‘ It ought to be clearly stated, as it affects the general issue of redemption by Jesus Christ ; and as it involves the question of relative obligation in regard to the subjects of this redemption.

“ ‘ But, for the decree which secures to the Saviour a seed to serve him, and a reward of success commensurate with the merit of his sufferings and death, it might have happened, that not so much as one might ever have been saved, and that consequently Christ might have shed his blood in vain. For, if every thing had been left entirely dependent on the free-will of man, all might have used their free-will. precisely in the same way ; and every individual might have rejected him exactly as the great mass of mankind actually do. But, can we conceive, that God would have given his Son to bear the iniquities of a ruined world, and have left it to mere chance, whether any single person should ever obtain mercy through him ? We cannot conceive this. In fact, we know, that it was not thus left to chance. We are sure, that there is a chosen people, who were from eternity given to Christ to be redeemed by his merits, and to to be saved by his grace ; and of those who were so given him, he neither has lost nor ever will lose so much as one. How many these are, God alone knows. But we are sure, they are many, even a multitude, whom no man can number, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.

“ ‘ As this doctrine involves the question of relative obligation, as to whether the honour of salvation belongs exclusively to God, or is in

part to be shared with him by his creatures, it is a point of some magnitude. Those who maintain it, refer all the glory of our salvation to God alone ; making him the author and finisher of it from first to last ; whilst those who deny it, give a great measure of the glory to the creature ; for, however they may acknowledge, that salvation through Christ is a gift to mankind at large, they make every individual the first moving cause of his own salvation ; and exactly in proportion as they ascribe salvation, either to human merit or human agency, as independent of God's grace, in that proportion they give to man a ground of glorying before God. Whatever they may say, according to them, it is man who maketh himself to differ ; and his salvation must ultimately be ascribed to himself as its true, proper, original, and moving cause. It is in this view, that I am always anxious to have the doctrine of predestination properly understood. It has long ceased to be with me a mere abstract and speculative point ; but, I never systematize it ; and never so maintain it, as not to give doctrines, of an opposite aspect, their due weight and consideration.'

" Here Mr. Evelyn paused, fearing that the weakness of Julia would be too much oppressed by a more protracted discourse ; so far, however, from appearing fatigued, she was still anxious to pursue the subject. There was one point on which she longed to obtain satisfaction. Apologizing for her dulness of apprehension, or the pertinacity of her scruples, she confessed herself unable to reconcile *any view* of predestination with the responsibility of the finally

condemned. 'Does not,' she inquired with peculiar earnestness, 'does not this decree operate on the destiny of the lost? Does not the fact of their being left out of the divine choice, necessarily produce the dreadful result of their eternal misery?'

"'I am glad, my dear Julia,' rejoined our venerable Instructor, 'that by these questions, you have given me an opportunity, which, through inadvertency, I should otherwise have lost, of meeting a difficulty, which is certainly the greatest which on this subject the inquiring mind has to encounter. Yet, is it not by any means insuperable. With regard to the motives, principles, and actions, which constitute that character of depravation which the justice of God has branded with eternal infamy, the decree of salvation has no influence either immediate or remote. Sinners act, and bring upon themselves the consequences of their guilt, just as if no such decree existed; and, as far as their moral agency is concerned, it has, in fact, no existence. Notwithstanding this decree, all men have a perfect freedom of will, nor are any compelled to embrace perdition. Indeed, the whole œconomy of Providence and mercy—the unbroken series of events, which, in reference to every individual of the human race, proclaim the being, wisdom, clemency, and paternal tenderness of the Divine Majesty—all operate in a contrary direction; and those that perish, through all these mighty obstructions force their passage to the flames. Those that possess the gospel, and those who are destitute of it—abuse light which is sufficient to guide them, and des-

rise goodness which is ever waiting to bless them. Their guilt is proportioned to the advantages they misimprove ; but, in every instance it is heinous and inexcusable, and loudly calls for deserved punishment.

“ ‘ But, if reasoning fail to convince us, that the merciful decrees of heaven are perfectly reconcileable with the free agency of men, in committing the sins which hurry them into destruction, we may carry the question to a tribunal competent to decide it, and which, in truth, has decided it—that is, the tribunal of the great God, from whose decisions there can be no appeal.

“ ‘ I will suppose you to put up this petition to God :—‘ Doth the eternal destination which thou hast made of my soul before I had a being—do, what they call in the schools, predestination and reprobation, destroy this proposition—that, if I perish, my destruction proceeds alone from myself? My God, remove this difficulty, and lay open to me this important truth.’ Suppose, that having presented this question, God should answer in the following manner :—‘ The frailty of your mind renders this matter incomprehensible to you ; it is impossible for a creature, finite as you are, to comprehend the whole extent of my decrees, and to see, in a clear and distinct manner, the influence they have on the destinies of men ; but I who formed them, perfectly understand them. I am truth itself, as I am wisdom. I do declare to you then, *that none of my decrees offer violence to my creatures*, and, that the destruction of sinners can proceed from none but themselves. You shall one day perfectly understand what you now un-

derstand only in part ; and then you shall see, with your own eyes, what you now see only with mine. Cease to anticipate a period which my wisdom defers ; and, laying aside speculation, attend to practice ; fully persuaded, that you are placed between reward and punishment, and may have a part in which you please.* Is it not true, that if God were to answer in this manner, it would be carrying, I do not say, rashness, but insolence, to the highest degree, to object against this testimony, or to desire more light into this subject at present ? But, God, my dear Julia, has given this answer, and in a manner infinitely more clear than I have stated it. He has given it in all those passages of his word which attest his willingness to save all who come to him ; in which he expostulates with transgressors, and entreats them, with all the earnestness of infinite compassion, to flee from impending wrath.’

“ At the close of these remarks, we both returned our warmest acknowledgments to the good man for his kind and interesting communications. The spirits of the invalid were evidently revived ; and, having introduced the subject of her doubts on certain points of Christian theology, she ventured to observe, with great diffidence, and with a view to obtain still further satisfaction, that there were some things in her own religious sentiments and feelings which occasionally perplexed her ; and that, if Mr. Evelyn would bear with her weakness, and give her the information she desired, it might smooth her

* *Vide Saurin.*

descent into the dark valley of the shadow of death ; and, perhaps, shed a ray of holy and blessed light on its cheerless and appalling shades.

“ ‘ The most momentous question which an accountable being can possibly ask,’ she observed, ‘ is, Am I a Christian ? a question, however, which is too generally decided according to the peculiarities of every sect to which it may be proposed. Each contending, that their’s is the exclusive path to heaven. A thoughtless world, indeed, will readily enough admit every claim, and complacently determine, that all are Christians who have the good fortune to live within the geographical boundaries of Christendom ; but the inventors and promulgators of creeds rush into the opposite extreme ; and, assuming to themselves the infallibility of scripture they exercise their fancied prerogative, in placing under the ban of heaven, those who refuse to believe, not the Christianity of the New Testament, but their own narrow and systematized explication of its doctrines.

“ ‘ I am,’ she continued, ‘ a sincere, though unworthy member of the church of England ; yet, I must confess myself dissatisfied with her exclusive and intolerant spirit. I hope to die in her communion ; but I cannot help wishing, that she breathed towards her enemies the benevolence of our divine Lord, when he prayed even for his murderers—‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !’ Every church, perhaps, ought to have its written homilies and articles ; but I cannot reconcile with my ideas of that charity which St. Paul has so

finely pourtrayed and eulogized, the damnatory clauses which consign to perdition those who do not, because they conscientiously cannot, receive every iota which such homilies and articles contain.'

" 'I not only admire,' rejoined Mr Evelyn, 'but most cordially approve the justice and liberality of the feelings which you have now expressed. Though a beneficed son of the church, I have never united with those who have placed her above Christianity. I consider our establishment as a human institution, designed to secure to the nation a great moral benefit, the greatest, indeed, that society can enjoy. I support and defend it, just so far as it is adapted to promote this object. As it is human, it is imperfect ; and I do not feel myself called upon to maintain, that its blemishes are beauties. Intolerance, however, is not alone, or even principally to be charged upon the church of England. It is the crying sin of every organized body of religionists under heaven, and, no doubt, arises out of the infirmity of human nature. It is high time, however, that its moral qualities should be analyzed and exposed ; for there is nothing more repugnant to the character of true religion, or more subversive of its interests. The intolerant of all churches, instead of making their religion the way to God, make a God of their religion. They deify their creed, and thus indirectly pay divine honors to themselves. And, as it is the prerogative of God to thunder, they fulminate their anathemas against all who presume to question their divinity.

“ ‘ Under the influence of this remorseless selfishness, such individuals confound persecution with zeal ; forgetting, that true Christian zeal is only philanthropy glowing with the ardour of devotion ! that it is love to man, brightened, purified, and excited, by love to God ; and that it ceases to be zeal, when it mingles itself with the irascible and malignant passions ; they suffer themselves to be hurried away by a fearful and fanatical energy, which consumes all the benevolence of their own hearts, while it is most destructive to the well-being of their fellow creatures.

“ ‘ It is not uncommon for men of this description, when they relax into the very tenderness of compassion towards those who differ from them, to make a merit of the condescension which tolerates them. But, what arrogant presumption is it in one mortal to talk of tolerating another. There is but one Being in the universe who possesses the right of toleration ; and who, indeed, is daily exercising it with infinite clemency even towards those, who, with impious daring, attempt to wrest this divine attribute from his hands. It is sufficiently disgusting when one man has the insolence to propose the gauge of his own understanding as the measure of another’s ; but when, in addition to this, he labours to deprive all whose minds are formed according to a different standard, of their civil rights and immortal hopes, he becomes an apostate from the gospel, and the enemy of his species.

“ ‘ All this is assumed in the very *principle* of toleration. *It is, in fact, graduated persecution.*

It condemns my thoughts, and my creed ; but mitigates the penalty. It views me as a criminal, and only refrains from punishing me. No human tribunal ought to take cognizance of an error in judgment ; for it comprehends no offence against the order, or the happiness of society. A man is not master of his own sentiments to believe, or disbelieve, just what is prescribed to him, or what he pleases. Can it be a crime for one not to be a logician ? Conscience does not teach us to reason well, but to act right. He that imposes upon me a creed, ought to be able to convince me of its truth by reasons adapted to my understanding ; or, to prove to me, by miraculous evidence, his own infallibility. If he cannot do either, where is his authority to condemn, or to tolerate me ? Toleration ! It is a literal blasphemy against the divinity of truth—it is high treason against the free-born majesty of the human spirit, created in the image of God. Whatever arguments establish the impolicy and wickedness of persecution, apply in all their force to its illegitimate offspring—toleration. When any church prescribes to me its own peculiar dogmas, annexing to the non-belief of these dogmas severe penalties in this life, and in that which is to come, and tells me with all the emphasis of its intolerance, ‘This is the Catholic faith,’ I involuntarily smile at its strange misapplication of terms. The catholic faith, is the faith in Christianity, as a divine system which Christians of all churches embrace though they may differ in their mode of understanding some of its doctrines, or of apprehending some of its facts,

“ ‘ If I were called upon to form a Catholic church, I should select the devout and humble from every sect. Their uniformity in goodness, is all the uniformity I should either expect or desire. There differences, on points of discipline, or of doctrine, would be no barrier to my communion with them ; for, if they are devout and humble, they must be Christians ; and the Catholic faith inspires, or ought to inspire, a Catholic spirit, whose language is, Grace be with *all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.’ I must neither hinder, nor threaten, nor beat my fellow servant. We have both received our Lord’s commands and if he misunderstands them, I may benevolently employ my good offices, to enlighten his mind, and correct his judgment ; but, if he pleads his Lord’s authority, and his own accountableness, I have no control over him. To his own master he stands or falls

“ ‘ Do not imagine, from these observations, that I am a Latitudinarian in my principles or conduct. The more charitable I am to others, the more severe do I wish to be towards myself. And, while I allow my fellow Christians to entertain opinions different from my own, I do not sanction what I conceive to be their errors. I only feel thankful, that I am not their judge ; and, if they manifest the spirit of Christ, I am happy to be considered as their brother. I have lived too long, and have seen too much of all churches, to award infallibility to any ; and I am least inclined to yield it to those who are the most forward to claim it. If I have a right to treat dissent from the creed or discipline I main-

tain, as a crime, he from whom I dissent, has an equal right to charge me with the same offence; and, when the spirit of crimination and re-crimination is indulged, what becomes of our Master's will? What becomes of Christianity?

“ ‘Then, it is your opinion, my dear Sir,’ I here observed, ‘that an individual may be a good member of the church of England, though he does not embrace every tittle of her creed, and though he may withhold his applauding Amen from her anathemas?’

“ ‘Assuredly,’ replied Mr. Evelyn, ‘Uniformity is required by our church only so far as it is possible, and for the sake of peace:—As to her anathemas, I wish, with Archbishop Tillotson, that she were well rid of them. But, as I have said before, these are not peculiar to any church; they have too long been the disgrace of all; and it becomes the duty of the enlightened and liberal members of each, to set an example of moderation, and, as far as they have influence, to wipe off this foul reproach from the Christian name. As we draw near to heaven, we naturally breathe the spirit of love and universal kindness. O, that the anthems of glorified spirits could be heard by all the contending partizans of Christendom; they would so ravish their souls with delight, that acrimonious tempers, and intolerant invectives, would be abandoned for the soul of harmony, and the song of angels. You, my dearest Julia, continued Mr. E. have nothing to fear on the ground of your personal Christianity. The Redeemer, I am persuaded, has received you; and no church, constituted on the principles which he has required, can possibly reject you.’

“ Julia, thus assured by the guide and guardian of her youth, felt inspired with new confidence. The timidity of her heart vanished, and her countenance brightened and glowed with a hope full of immortality. ‘ There is, however,’ she remarked, ‘ one other topic to which I will take leave to advert, and trespass for a few moments longer on the kindness of my more than father. My habitual feelings and sentiments tell me, that all is well. In religious duties, I enjoy the purest delight, and my anticipations all rise to prospects ineffably fair and glorious; but I want to reason on the subject, as well as to feel. If I have a good hope, through grace, I desire rationally and scripturally to account for it. At least, I am anxious to ascertain, whether I possess unequivocal evidence, that I am an acceptable being in the sight of God ?

“ ‘ There are certain Christians who lay great stress on inward conflicts, horrors, and raptures; and who reject, as spurious, that piety which cannot be traced to a commencement strikingly marked and distinguished by circumstances too indelible ever to be erased from the memory. Their language, whether in seasons of despondency, or in moments of exultation, savors of the qualities of sensual and human passion. They talk of their ‘ Beloved,’ meaning, that divine Being, before whom the holy John, in the Apocalypse, was awed into prostrate reverence, as if he were something earthly. In mourning his absence, they profess to mingle their sighs with the winds, their tears with the babbling brooks, and to ‘ carve his name on every wounded tree ;’ when he manifests his presence, their terms of

endearment are such as persons, deeply enamoured, might employ to express the emotions of mere mortal love. With such piety as this, my dear Sir, I know not how to sympathise. Mine did not thus commence ; and I am not only a stranger to this mode of displaying it, but I feel an unconquerable repugnance to it. Can I then be a true Christian? For, the persons to whom I refer, are unquestionably ‘ the excellent of the earth.’ They are unrivalled, not only in the seraphic ardor of their zeal, but in the holy disinterestedness of their benevolence.’

“ ‘ Christians, and very good Christians too, my dear Julia,’ rejoined Mr. Evelyn, ‘ labour under infirmities and mistakes. It is, perhaps, the most prevalent weakness of our nature, to make ourselves standards to others. This, I am sure, is the case, on the subject of religion. We are too apt to imagine, that God has but one method by which to prepare and conduct his creatures to heaven ; that because certain principles are indispensable, that those principles must always operate precisely in the same manner. We want, in fact, to establish a dull and unnatural uniformity, where the manifold wisdom of the Almighty chooses to display itself in all the magnificent variety of its infinite resources.

“ ‘ Every individual creature in the universe differs from its fellow-being, even of the same species, and has an identity of its own. And we may affirm, at least, in reference to every human individual, that he is under a dispensation of moral government which applies to himself, and to no other of his race. In its great characteristics, it must be admitted, that human nature is

the same in all its diversified myriads. It is likewise equally apparent, that religion is distinguished by certain definite and unvarying principles, in all its multiplied, distinct, and peculiar operations. But, as the features, complexions, and dispositions of mankind, are infinitely various, so also are the aspects, modifications, and circumstances, under which religion presents itself.

“ ‘ There can be no doubt, that *in every instance*, the germ of Christian piety must be *divinely* communicated to the human heart. In that corrupt soil, it is not indigenous, but must be implanted by a celestial hand. When so implanted, it grows and expands into the branches, foliage, and fruits, which bespeak its heavenly origin. As a principle, its essential elements are supreme love to God, conformity to his moral attributes, and complacency in him as the chief good. In all its subjects, this is its nature and character. But, as to the time when it is imparted, the method of its communication, and the way in which it manifests its reality and power, nothing can be prescribed, no rule can be laid down. In all, it is equally conversion, or spiritual renovation. Though, in some cases, the change may not have been perceptible, and the individual subjects of it may be unable to trace its commencement and progress.

“ ‘ When the life has been previously vicious and profane, or the mind peculiarly hostile to the truth and spirit of piety, this change must be remembered, whether it was suddenly or gradually effected. To use the nervous language of Dr. Paley, ‘ It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot ; a man might as easily forget his

escape from shipwreck.' But, in other instances, where the operation has been real, and the effects unquestionable, its beginning has left no impression—has awakened no particular attention to itself. Some highly-favored individuals there have undoubtedly been, and, I believe, their number is greatly increasing, who, through the pious efforts of parents, guardians, or ministers, in early childhood, have become the subjects of a Divine influence; in whose hearts religion and virtue have been coeval with the dawn of reason, and the sense of accountability. Both these classes, instead of suspecting each other's piety—the one, questioning the fact of instantaneous and conspicuous conversion; and the other, denying the possibility of gradual and imperceptible illumination—ought, with adoring gratitude, to fall before that God, who, in different ways, has imparted to them both his saving mercy.

“With regard to internal conflicts, and the pains and ecstasies, of which many delight to say so much, I have only to observe, that certainly a divine and heavenly life infused into the soul, to struggle with its ignorance, and its pollutions, and to cheer and sustain it with an influence congenial with its spiritual nature and high destiny, must be a matter of consciousness and experience. It must have its sorrows and its joys—its seasons of anxiety and satisfaction. But, the sensible energy of these, and their alternations, depend more upon physical and constitutional temperament, than upon the principle itself; and are, no doubt, considerably affected by the system and mode of religious instruction

which the individuals have embraced, and to which they have been accustomed.

“ The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,”

prevailing equally at all times, are the effect of accurate, extensive, and profound scriptural knowledge ; and are to be found only in a mind well disciplined to self-government, and able to discriminate between the fervor of devotion, and the agitation of passion ; which asks for guidance, rather than excitement ; and is satisfied from itself, without the aid of spiritual stimulants and cordials.

“ “ I feel with you, my dear Julia, an utter distaste for that mystical and metaphorical language, which, it has been well observed, feeds the heart with chimeras ; and, in the place of spiritual love, substitutes sentiments too nearly allied to carnal affections, and too apt to excite them. The more susceptible the heart, or lively the imagination, the more we ought to be on our guard against those images by which they may be affected. For how can we see the relations of the mystical object, if we do not, at the same time, see the sensual ?

“ “ Divine love is pure principle, filling the whole sphere of the soul with its spiritual and immortal element. It is light in the understanding—sublimity in the affections—the most elevated rule correcting the judgment—and the noblest object determining the choice. Individuals, the least likely to be impressed by sensible objects, are often most under the influence of this spiritual energy. Their moral capacities,

less debased by animal and sensual life, are more congenial with its nature: not that the passions are to be considered as 'the Pagans of the soul,' and to be exterminated. The heart is the seat of religion. Where it is enthroned, the appetites shrink from its presence to their proper distance; but the affections wait around it in duteous homage and obedience.'

" 'How much,' exclaimed Julia, 'am I indebted to my best friend for the salutary instructions he has so kindly afforded to me. My heart is relieved, and I am happy. I have long felt religion to be all that he has described. I am glad that such is its real character; and that to be a Christian, it is only necessary to know, to adore, to love, and to obey the Saviour—to follow him, though with trembling and faltering steps—to renounce self, as either originating or maturing the principles of piety—to rely solely on infinite merit for our acceptance with God—and to be renewed by infinite grace, as our best, our only qualification, to dwell in his presence for ever.'

" 'I am deeply conscious of frailties, imperfections, and sins. I have suffered much from the heart's idolatry—suffered more than I can ever disclose. It has been finely said of one, that 'her noble heart had room but for two illustrious guests—the love of God and the love of her country;' and that, 'when these departed, the inmate, finding the mansion no longer tenantable, her soul fled with its glorious visitors to heaven.' Alas! the treacherous guest, welcomed by my weak and confiding heart, is gone; but not to heaven. I dare not—must not, follow

him even in thought. I have sometimes murmured in silence at my cruel lot; this has stained my conscience with guilt, and disturbed my peace. Perfect acquiescence in the will of God, in the hour of desolation, is a high—I sometimes fear—an impossible attainment. Yet, why should I repine? I ought to learn—I must learn—like the bird of paradise, not to set my foot on earth.’

“This was the only occasion on which this heart-broken, affectionate creature, ever made the slightest allusion to her unfortunate attachment. It was too much for her exhausted feelings; and we soon left her to the tranquillity of night, and the soothing influence of

“Nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”

‘To you, my dear Emily, I fear the detail of these long dialogues, *‘à la Cœlebs,’* will be sadly tedious. I cannot convey to you the looks, the tones, and the thousand nameless graces and endearments with which they were accompanied and received. Their monotony was broken by occasional pauses; by the tender offices of affection, which sickness so much requires; and by the interchange of sentiments, which relaxed the tension of thought when in the least degree it seemed to threaten weariness.

“For my own part, the previous state of my mind disposed me to receive these instructions with an infinitely greater zest than I ever felt in pursuing the brightest novelty that ever captivated my imagination, when pleasure was my business, and fashion my deity. If you regard

them with distaste, or indifference, lay them aside for the present. Recur to them in the hour of solemn feeling, or of calm reflection, when the world recedes, and you sigh and say, 'all is vanity.' In my view, they have divested Christianity of those qualities, or rather appendages, which its mistaken votaries have laboured to identify with it; but which, I now perceive, are foreign to its nature. I once imagined, that I never could be brought to receive certain doctrines of the gospel; but my objections were founded on misapprehension. The religion of a narrow, coarse, and uninstructed mind—and that of a generous, refined, and enlightened one—though derived from the same source, produce totally different impressions on those who have no other medium of ascertaining what religion is. We are too prone to judge of piety by its accidental associations. But it appears to me, that I now behold it in its *own light*, without the obscurities of ignorance, or the discolorations of prejudice. Adieu, till I have something more to communicate.

"Your's, as ever,

"LOUISA DELAVAL."

CHAPTER III.

"Oh! thou bright Heaven, if thou art calling now
Thy brighter angels to thy bosom—rest;
For lo! the brightest of thy host is gone—
Departed—and the earth is dark below."—*Cornwall.*

As the Autumn was far advanced, and Sir George Delaval had with great difficulty con-

trived to spend nearly six months in the seclusion of the Isle of Wight, he determined on returning to town, and on paying a visit to his seat in Buckinghamshire, where the maiden sister of the late Lady Delaval resided. Louisa, having obtained her father's permission to remain with the Wilmingtons, removed from the Hermitage, and became the constant companion of Julia, whose health had so visibly improved during the last fortnight, that though no sanguine hopes could be entertained of her final recovery, it was deemed expedient, by her friends, that she should return to Beaulieu. The first fine day was selected for the purpose, and thither the whole family, with their interesting visitor, arrived, after a delightful sail of about three hours. But former scenes awakened in the bosom of the invalid, painful recollections. Every spot was endeared and embittered by associations which could not be broken. Smiles and tears, alternately, and often at the same moment, illumined and bedewed her face. She would muse for hours in pensive sadness, and indulge in all the dangerous luxury of feelings, excited by objects which, though inanimate, and to others indifferent, were to her the living, conscious images of joys which had passed away, and which could never return. At all times, the scenery of nature receives its colouring from the mind; and the one is bright or sombre, as the other is elated or depressed. Alas! the heart is the creator or destroyer of its own paradise; and scenes touched, nay, almost hallowed, by the magic of the past, never lose their power over us. The witnesses of depart-

ed pleasures appear to retain the identity and freshness of their existence only to reproach the mutability of our short-lived happiness. They remain just as the eye delighted to rest upon them in the moments of silent rapture ; but those moments—where are they? Their shadows, cold and distant, seem to glide before the imagination, and to mock the heart that sighs in vain for their return.

Julia felt all this. The feeling was profound and secret. She could not, on this subject, reveal the sorrow which was thus newly awakened in her bosom. When Louisa descanted with poetical enthusiasm on the beauty and sublimity of the objects around them, her tongue was silent ; but the eloquent expression of her countenance seemed to say

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,
I see a hand you cannot see."

Yet did she struggle to overcome emotions, it was useless, and even injurious to indulge. The effort was successful, and her mind soon recovered its tranquillity ; but her disease gained unwonted power from the conflict, and from the first week after her arrival she grew rapidly worse.

The attentions of Louisa, equally prompted by affection and piety, were unremitted. While she endeavoured to soothe the anguish of nature, she desired to witness the power of religion, and thus to fortify her heart against the temptations of life, and the terrors of death. The event, so long dreaded, at length approached.

The following letter will disclose its interesting and impressive circumstances :

LOUISA TO MRS. DORMER.

“ Beaulieu.

“ The sable appendages of this letter, my dear Emily, ere you have perused a line of its contents, have announced to you what has taken place. . . Yes ! this lovely scene wears the gloom of desolation, and the mansion of peace is changed into the house of mourning. Every bosom sighs with despondency ; and there is one countenance here on which sits the brooding horror of despair. During the last few days, my heart has been torn with emotions too powerful for utterance. I have had an agonizing task to perform—but it is over. I would weep—but cannot : this sweet relief is denied me. Think not that I am thus overwhelmed with sorrow for the dead ; it is for the living I mourn. For the pale, petrified, and almost unconscious being—the dismal wreck of humanity—whose vacant look of idiocy pierces my very soul—it is the unhappy de Clifford, whose sudden appearance on this awful occasion has obscured the glory which departing excellence had shed upon my mind, and alarmed us all with the most terrifying apprehensions for his reason, and even—for his life.

“ I have beheld, in the strongest imaginable contrast, the votary of religion, and the slave of infidelity ; the child of hope, and the victim

of despair ; the persevering believer, and the faithless apostate—the one, beautiful in death, the smile and the bloom of immortality on her cheek ; the other, ghastly in life, his countenance distorted by agony, and covered with more than funereal darkness. But, let me not anticipate what I mean to relate as connectedly as I can. My thoughts are so confused, that I scarcely know how to take up the thread of my narrative.

“ I believe I informed you of our intended removal to this place, and of the apparent convalescence of our dear Julia. We arrived in safety, and, for a week, the favourable appearances which afforded us so much pleasure continued. But, the insidious malady played with our feelings only to recruit its strength, that it might return with increased vigour to mock our expectations. Its most virulent and distressing symptoms followed each other in rapid succession. The debility of the amiable sufferer became extreme ; and almost every moment she required the prompt assistance of those around her. Oh, Emily, could you have seen the triumphant mother of this dying saint, nobly rising above herself, displaying heroic, or rather Christian tenderness, blending all the greatness of magnanimity with all the fondness of affection, how would you have exulted in the glorious character which the Gospel imparts to woman ! I have often gazed with silent wonder on the parent and the child—both supported ; one, perfectly resigned—the other, almost too happy. I think, a physician of considerable eminence and experience, has somewhere remarked, ‘ The light of divine revelation is, after all, the only

light which can effectually disperse the gloom of a sick chamber, and irradiate even the countenance of death.' The truth of this observation was never more strikingly confirmed than in the present instance. The daughter, animated by a lively hope, her eye happily invigorated by faith, penetrating the thick mist which hangs over the tomb; the mother, resigning her lovely charge to that Redeemer, to whose arms she had led her when a little child—both exhibiting the mighty and blessed influence of true religion at a season when every other source of consolation is dried up, and every other aid is useless and vain. What has been beautifully said of another parent, in similar circumstances, is peculiarly applicable to Mrs. Wilmington: 'She saw her young pilgrim going to the promised land, and the view enabled her to watch her as she passed through the waves of Jordan.'

"Our unremitted devotedness to the object of our solicitude, was the only thing which seemed to afflict her. 'She was grieved,' she said, 'to engross attentions which she could not return. Social duties were reciprocal; but she could only receive.' We reminded her, that there was a class of duties which were purposely intended to refine the character, and to subdue our natural selfishness—such were the duties, or rather the pleasures, to which we were called. And that, in soothing the pain of sickness, and assisting the spirit to unrobe, we were only paying in advance what would be returned to us again.

“ All her own sufferings she bore with exemplary patience. Much as she endured in the actual conflict with the king of terrors, she assured us, it was nothing in comparison to what her fears had forboded. The shadow seemed more formidable than the reality. The near prospect of death, instead of overpowering, seemed to brace anew the relaxed energies of her frame ; and, instead of being absorbed by a selfish care about her own pains and weakness, she interested herself almost continually and exclusively about the happiness of others.

“ At her request, the children of her little school were one day admitted to see her, in order to receive her last benediction. She was raised up in her bed for the occasion. When they entered, she received them with a smile of heavenly benignity, and presented each, accompanied by tender and appropriate expressions, with a copy of those beautiful tracts— ‘ The Dairyman’s Daughter,’ and ‘ The Young Cottager.’ She affectionately called them her children, and expressed a timid hope, that her poor orphans would not be left to the snares and the vices of ignorance ; she had gathered these lambs for the good shepherd, and felt confident, that he would not allow them to stray again into the wilderness.

“ To the eldest of them, a fine girl of about twelve years of age, she addressed herself— ‘ You see, Maria,’ she observed, ‘ the truth of what I have often told you. Youth presents no security against the ravages of disease, and the tyranny of death. But religion can triumph over both. It is our best guide in health—our

sweet solace in sickness. I thank the Author of my being that I was taught to remember him in the days of my infancy. He does not forget me now. You are shocked to see me so emaciated; but I shall soon put on the robes of immortality. You once asked me to explain to you a verse in the Bible, which I did not then, and do not now, fully understand; but I shall soon, very soon, know all its meaning. 'He shall *beautify* the meek with salvation.' He has taught me resignation to his will. I have no wish to live, nor am I impatient to die; and, as my heavenly Father has imparted to me the characteristic disposition of his children, I trust in him for the complete fulfilment of his promise; salvation will adorn me with unfading beauty, and this 'vile body' my Redeemer will 'fashion like unto his own most glorious body.' Do not forget my imperfect instructions. When I am gone, read this little book, and remember me. Let me meet you at the day of judgment, a happy, glorified spirit.' Here her voice faltered. The children were all deeply affected; and she, who was specially addressed, sobbed aloud. As they withdrew, Mrs. Wilmington promised, that their school should not be broken up; but, that some one would still be found who would delight to teach them the way to heaven.

"Exhausted by the emotion which this scene occasioned, Julia sunk into repose. Her sleep greatly refreshed her; and, awakening with recruited spirits, she observed to me, who had been watching at her side, 'What a blessing is sleep,—and death is sleep: when Christians

die, they only fall asleep. Sleep is necessary—it is the sweetest refuge from weariness and sorrow—it invigorates the faculties for contemplation or exertion—shuts out the horrors of darkness, and is the presage and the pledge of a morning that will assuredly arise. United to a living Saviour, the Christian cannot die; but he must pass through the sleep of nature before he can awake and be satisfied. This sleep, I feel, is not far distant from me; the dews and the shadows remind me that night is at hand. Christians, before they sleep, pray; and, the little interval that remains, I hope to spend in this sacred employment—like the angel of Scripture, I would ascend to heaven in the flames of the altar.’

“After a considerable pause, in which she was evidently engaged in mental prayer, she remarked, ‘I should tremble at my confidence did I not know on what it rests. It is founded *alone* on the merits of my Redeemer. Some time since I was harassed with natural fears. I dreaded *dying*; but those fears are happily removed. The awful form, whose countenance and stature were so terrible in the distance, now approaches me in all the mild lustre of a messenger of peace; he smiles with the beauty of an angel, and beckons me away.’ With an air of peculiar solemnity, she added, ‘I know that *my* Redeemer liveth.’

“During the last week of her life, she suffered greatly from convulsions; and she, as well as ourselves, imagined that each renewed attack would be fatal; but she was wonderfully supported, and, on one occasion, remarked, ‘What

are my sufferings to my Saviour's? and how much easier is my bed than his cross!—I have been comforted,' she continued, 'by reflecting, that there is as necessary and as intimate a connexion between all our present pains, and the glory of our future state, as there was between the agony of the Redeemer in Gethsemane, and the mediatorial throne to which he is advanced. The Captain of Salvation, by the infinitely wise arrangements of his Almighty Father, was made perfect through sufferings; and, by the same arrangements, the light afflictions of his followers are but for a moment, and work out for them a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.'

"Her mind occasionally wandered; yet even its hallucinations discovered what were her habitual thoughts and sentiments. With a sweet smile, in a moment of delirium, she said, 'With my mother, and Louisa, and Edward, I was to have taken the Sacrament on Sunday; and Mr. Evelyn was to have given it to us—but I died on Tuesday;' and she added with a deep sigh, 'Edward did not come. I am now in heaven. I thought the Spring would never return; but this is a beautiful Spring, and here the roses never fade, friends never die—but Edward is not here.' Then, waking as from a dream, she complained of languor, and intreated us to pray that her patience might not fail; adding, with an indescribable expression of countenance, 'The cup which my *Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it?—It is bitter, but it is salutary. It is the bequest of my Saviour, as well as the gift of my

Father;—‘Drink ye all of it’—‘Let us drink and live;’—‘It is the chalice of mercy.’

“I hope never to have erased from my memory the scene which but a few hours preceded her dissolution, when the torch of life, about to expire, shed an unusually bright, but transitory radiance. It was in the evening. A glorious October sun was fast declining in the western sky. The clouds were variegated with every hue of beauty, and threw their shadows and their tints on the distant ocean, and retiring landscape. The chamber of Julia opened upon this fine prospect, but the curtains of her window concealed it from her view. At this interesting moment, she expressed a desire to take a last grateful look of nature, and to bid farewell to objects upon which her eyes were so soon to close for ever. We indulged her innocent wish, and gently removed her to the casement. A flush of joy tinged her pale cheeks with the glow of health, and her eyes kindled into an expression of soft delight. ‘How lovely, yet how evanescent,’ she exclaimed, ‘is this scene. It conveys a melancholy, but not unpleasing lesson to my heart—

‘The dying day, and pale declining year,
But represent the near approaching doom
Of all things earthly.’

‘The autumn of my year is come. A decaying leaf, shaken from the stem whereon it grew, I am sinking on the cold lap of my mother earth. But, like the leaf which, on this sweet evening, trembles from yonder spray, I fall surrounded with tranquil beauty. A delicious calm is diffus-

ed through my bosom, and the setting sun of life departs in glory.'

"I remarked, that the revolution of one season was but the pledge and commencement of another; and that the close of our mortal existence was but passing into the unchanging regions of immortality and joy. As we had a few days before been reading *Autumnal Reflections*, presented to me by a friend, I repeated, as apposite to the occasion, its concluding lines. Observing, that while the Christian sees

"The smiling universe wax old and fade,
The sun grow dark, the moon withdraw her light,
The trembling host of heaven their spheres forsake,
Drop from the sky, like Autumn's latest leaf,
And dissolution shake the sinking world;"

"He also

"— sees the exulting sun climb o'er the hills,
With golden beam gilding the joyous earth;
Sees the young Spring unfold her infant blooms,
And, smiling, throw her green and flowery robe
O'er nature, rising from her wintry tomb;
And, with glad Hope, anticipates the morn,
When the commission'd angel's voice shall burst
The graves, and bid the slumbering dead awake.
Then Spring shall wear an Amaranthine wreath,
And the transformed clay, like buried seed,
That long beneath the wintry glebe lay hid,
In undecaying loveliness shall rise
An evergreen on Eden's hills to bloom,
While years celestial roll their ceaseless round."

"Mr. Evelyn observed, that the charm of existence is hope; and that if man could ever arrive at the point where he has nothing to anticipate, he could not be happy. 'Expectation,' he continued, 'is the vital principle of happiness. What

we imagine that we may be, reconciles us to an endurance of what we are. And, in the full tide of enjoyment, if we knew all our bliss, it would instantly produce satiety. We naturally desire a felicity too glorious for the imagination to conceive, and infinitely greater than any thing we have ever known. The human spirit is attracted by the ineffable, and the brightest glory of the Gospel is its declaration, that 'we are now the sons of God;' and that 'it doth not yet *appear* what we shall be.' Define, circumscribe, bring the greatest object within the ken of experience, and we are thrown back upon ourselves. Our character and destiny can rise no higher.

"It is well for us that we see through a glass, darkly, as it regards the life to come; and it is of incalculable advantage, that, in reference to the present, we know nothing beyond the passing moment. Were a map to be presented to us, in which we could discern the windings of our future way as distinctly as we can look back upon our past *route*, our desire to proceed in the journey of life, would be no greater than it is to retrace the steps which we have already trodden. If we could lift the curtain which divides the future from the present, we should find that it was like one of those beautifully colored transparencies which are contrived so as to intercept the view of uninteresting or disagreeable objects.'

"In this respect," replied Julia, 'the veil which conceals the heavenly world differs entirely from that which you have so justly described. In that happy state, 'the wicked cease

from troubling,'—'the weary are at rest.' It is only a felicity that would overpower our present faculties, that is here mercifully shut out from our view. And, oh, what an inconceivable superiority has the Christian over those who either neglect or despise the Gospel.

"I am now arrived at that point where earthly pleasure can yield me no enjoyment, and where human power can render me no assistance. Yet, I hope; and my hope strengthens as my flesh and my heart fail. The line that separates between faith and reality is narrowing every moment, and it will soon be passed. 'O death, where is thy sting?'—'O grave, where is thy victory?'—'Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' All my fears vanish before the light of eternity. How sweet this very hour to die.' As she uttered these animated expressions, her eyes sparkled; rays of light seemed to circle her brow. As the portals of immortality were opening, a portion of its radiance shed around her the brightness of eternal glory.

"Casting a parting glance on the scene, from which she expressed a wish to be removed, she started with sudden surprise. Our attention was immediately directed to the window, when Mr. Evelyn discerned a figure slowly moving along the walk which led to the hall. He instantly quitted the room, and left us to our charge. Alas! the fatal messenger was come. After a slight convulsion, she made an effort to speak—uttered the single, expressive, and heart-cheering sound—'PEACE!'—smiled—and fell asleep.

"Adieu,

"LOUISE."

CHAPTER IV.

"Thou art a man whose mild and reverend functions
Might change the black creed of misanthropy,
And bid my better angel half return;
But—'tis impossible!"—*Maturin.*

DE CLIFFORD's abrupt return to Beaulieu, and at a time when he was supposed not to be in England, greatly alarmed Mr. Evelyn, who was the only person that recognized him as the cause of the dying Julia's sudden emotion. Dreading the consequence of his unlooked-for intrusion at such a season, the good man hurried to the spot to prevent his approach. The precaution, however, was needless. The spirit of her in whose bosom it might have excited a momentary pang, was so near its departure, that the appalling vision only hastened its flight without disturbing its repose.

Mr. Evelyn met his fallen pupil more in "sorrow than in anger."—"Edward," he exclaimed, in tremulous accents, "why are you here? Are you come to multiply injuries where you have already inflicted so many? Know, rash boy, it is too late to offer reparation, or to implore forgiveness. This is now the dwelling of peace, and light, and joy; but pass its threshold, and all will be commotion, darkness, and distress."

"I *must* pass it, however," said De Clifford, in a tone of firmness, and with a look of wild desperation. "Are you not all Christians? Passion rages not in your bosoms, and mild charity is the soul, the essence of your faith. I must be forgiven. Your Master forgave *his* murderers;

and Julia must speak forgiveness to a heart which is dead to all feeling but love to her: Love—love, is the only prejudice which clings to me in spite of myself; every other I have shaken off, and for ever.”

“Is it to me, De Clifford, you address such language as this?” returned the venerable pastor, with an air of offended dignity; but instantly yielding to the compassion of his nature, he changed the sounds of reproach into the voice of tenderness. “Edward, you are not yourself,” he continued; “retire with me to the library, where we have so often sat, and let us talk over this purpose of yours. You must sleep ere you meditate an interview which, at any moment, must be painful, but which now might prove fatal.” Then, gently taking his arm, he led him from Mrs. Wilmington’s to his own house. Scarcely had they seated themselves, when a messenger announced to Mr. Evelyn the sorrowful tidings that Julia was no more. De Clifford too surely read the sad intelligence in his countenance; and, without waiting for its verbal confirmation, the withering thought chilled his heart. “Fool! fool!” he cried, in a tone of piercing anguish, and immediately sunk into apparent listlessness. “I loved her, and destroyed her,” he uttered, after a long, deep pause. And then, with the ideal monster, the mad creation of the god, or rather the dæmon of his idolatry, he exclaimed,

“If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never lov’d,
That which I love would still be beautiful,
Happy, and giving happiness.”

Mr Evelyn replied, with a peculiar solemnity of emphasis, "That which you love is happy; while she lived, even your desertion of her, fatal as it has proved to her life, could not rob her of her principles, or her peace; and now she is a blessed angel. The scintillations of animated hope are exchanged for perfect glory. The morning star is not more bright and beautiful than the disenthralled and happy spirit of your Julia."

"Oh, at this hour," exclaimed De Clifford, with a countenance of despair, "at this hour, I would give worlds to be a Christian. How willingly would I now believe the legend so well got up by him of Nazareth. Father, would I were thy son in the faith! But, who can force his own belief—who can render that credible to his feelings which is incredible to his understanding? If there be an hereafter, Julia must be happy. I once took all this for granted—'twas a pleasant dream—why, why did I awake?"

"Forbear, young man," said Mr. Evelyn, eager to silence the blasphemy he was shocked to hear, and wishing to excite in the bosom of his companion, the sympathies and associations of other days; "forbear, I beseech you, to impose upon your heart a vain sophistry, alike revolting to its sensibilities, and fatal to its happiness. At this moment, it yearns to invest the object of its love with a being and a glory beyond the grave; even the passions seek repose in an after-life. Hear, then, the voice of instinct, if you are deaf to that of reason."

"Alas!" said the unhappy De Clifford, "neither my instinct, nor my reason, pleads in behalf

of religion. What have I to gain from it but remorse? For the dear sake of my murdered Julia, I could wish it were true, though all its thunderbolts were hurled at my devoted head; but to me, immortality is a vision—the soul a portion of subtle matter—death an eternal sleep.”

“Misguided, infatuated boy!” rejoined Mr. Evelyn; “let me not hear your horrible confession of faith. Your oracle has laughed in in derision at ‘the comfortable creed some Christians have.’ But, even the gloomy annals of fanaticism, which exhibit the Gospel, distorted, calumniated, and yet believed, have never furnished any thing so unnatural, so cruel, and appalling, as the doctrines which you have now avowed. You invert the order of nature; instead of exalting the human being, and favouring its aspirations after something beyond itself, more beautiful than earth, and more permanent than time, you degrade its character, and blight its hopes. Your ambition is not to soar, but to sink. You erase from the human mind the only idea suited to its glorious faculties, and which it can worthily cherish—the idea of a Deity, which, unlike every other with which we are familiar, is capable of continual expansion, enlarges with our intellectual powers, ranges through all space, stretches beyond all limited duration—which, in the eloquent language of the Christian Demosthenes, borrows splendor from all that is fair, subordinates to itself all that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe. But this is not the season for argument on such a subject; and, indeed, your case is not one to which reasoning, in the first instance, can be

beneficially applied. Your disease is in the heart. Christianity does not force its evidence upon the bad. The good alone discern its reality, and feel its power. It is by doing the will of God, according to the dictates of natural conscience, that we are qualified to appreciate and receive the doctrines of revealed religion. By sinning against one, we deprive ourselves of the guidance of both. The atheism of the life is the root and principle from which proceeds the mental renunciation of a Deity. He that lives without God, will be led to deny his being, when such denial becomes necessary to his repose; and he that converts, what ought to be the object of hope, into an agent of terror, will be induced, in his own defence, to reason it out of existence; and, after a series of efforts, his conscience may at last be brought to espouse the cause of his infidelity. You have even admitted this. You ask, what can you gain from religion but remorse? Are you not aware, that by this admission, you are conceding to religion a divine purity, an ethical excellence, which can never be reconciled with the character of imposture?

“If Christianity be true, or if you admit its truth, you confess that you must be the victim of despair. This surely must arise from a persuasion that you are not entitled to its consolations. What a state of heart must that be, which renders immortality a subject of dreadful apprehension; which converts the richest boon of heaven into its direst curse!

“If the Gospel were, as you impiously imagine, ‘a cunningly devised fable,’ would it not aid the cause of falsehood? Instead of enlight-

ening, would it not pervert the conscience ; and, instead of inflicting the pangs of remorse, would it not soothe the anguish which guilt naturally produces ? How does it happen, that a system of imposture, and personal criminality, which flow from the same source, and acknowledge the same parent, should be so much at variance ; that a religion, founded on a lie, should shake the conscience with a thousand terrors ; and that the farther a man proceeds in the course of guilt, the greater is his enmity to that which is itself a master-piece of wickedness ? In the season of cool and calm reflection, perhaps, you will be able to solve this moral enigma.

“ I have been young, and now am old ; but, in all the agitating and varying scenes of three score years and ten, I have always found, that the Christian religion improves the character, and consoles the heart. It has uniformly banished the woes of the miserable, who have sought its support ; and to the good and the happy, it has imparted their principles and their felicity.

“ I have often dwelt with the purest satisfaction on its abstract beauty, as a system of truth ; but its influence in promoting the well-being of mankind, in every possible situation of ignorance, guilt, and wretchedness, has never failed to convince me of its celestial origin and infinite value. To your troubled and fearfully apprehensive spirit, it appears like that side of the pillar of the wilderness, whose palpable darkness inspired the Egyptian host with perplexity and terror ; while, to millions who do not wish to dwell in a fatherless world, and to whom the revealed doctrine of a Providence ‘ is a breath-

ing harmony ;' it is like the opposite side of that pillar, to the favoured Israelites—the symbol of Deity, a moving monument of hallowed flame, that lights, and guides, and cheers them through the desert."

"I admit," replied De Clifford, somewhat impatiently, "that this is metaphor; and it may be truth; but I want no messenger from heaven to tell me what I am; and being what I am, the idea of annihilation is more welcome to me than the assurance of perpetual existence. Life—*human* life! if it be more than a vapour, it is misery—it may be endured for a few tedious irksome years; but, who ever lived and did not feel how great a privilege it is to die? How strange is the contrast between Nature in general, and that miserable section of it—Humanity!

"————— beautiful!
 How beautiful is all the visible world!
 How glorious in its action and itself!
 But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
 To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
 A conflict of its elements, and breathe
 The breath of degradation and of pride,
 Contending with low wants and lofty will,
 Till our mortality predominates;
 And men are—what they name not to themselves,
 And trust not to each other."

"And is this the jargon," answered Mr. Evelyn, "by which you are induced, voluntarily, to renounce the high destiny of endless being? I detest all *cant*—the cant of religion is sufficiently nauseous; but the cant of misanthropy, though uttered in a gorgeous and pompous style, is insufferably disgusting. It is a strange barter of

immortal hopes for senseless words ; but thus it is when the human spirit wanders from its centre, and abandons its only guide. This species of suicide has in it all the desperation of the most atrocious guilt, and all the extravagance of the most egregious folly. It is yielding the soul to dark thoughts, and still darker deeds. It is a deliberate and actual revolt from good to evil. The intellectual being, who lives not in the past, or the future, and concentrates all his energies of thought and feeling in the present, is a terrific enemy to himself, and to all around him. (Memory and hope were mercifully designed to give man the lessons of experience, and the stimulus of anticipation in his pursuit after future and attainable good ; but he to whom memory, is remorse—and hope, nothing, must expend his whole capacity in the gratification of the present moment ; and of what nature that gratification is likely to be, let the annals of Infidelity attest.

“ Edward, I knew you once innocent, virtuous, and happy. The day brought pleasure, and the night repose. Even passion was hallowed by principle, and the object of love was at once the motive and the example of piety. You were then the delight of our circle, and we love you still ; but the love of complacency is now exchanged for that pity. It expresses itself in tears, and not in smiles. My son ! My son ! ”—exclaimed the good old man, falling on his neck, and giving vent to all the generous tenderness of his affectionate heart.

De Clifford, not at all prepared for this unexpected burst of feeling, was completely subdued ; but he could not weep. Grasping the

hand of his guardian, without uttering a word he left him, to seek his chamber. Pride, shame, and remorse, wrung his soul. The tempest was violent, and, instead of subsiding, the more he thought the more it raged. He paced the room with hurried steps—till, exhausted with anguish, he threw himself upon the bed. But there was a pang in his heart whose throbbing would not be soothed. If, for a moment, he forgot himself, he was roused to consciousness by this inward, unappeasable horror. At last, as if wearied with inflicting torture, the dæmon seemed to sleep; but the repose of his victim was even more terrible than his waking agony. In this dread interval, his life was “curdled into one hour.” (The gone-by visions of former years, came and went as shadows before him, but divested of every charm of pleasure.) The season was the tyranny of pain, and it searched, as with the dart of death, every recess of his spirit, and passed along distinctly, and at the same instant, through every fibre of his body. The mortal and the immortal were equally under the power of mysterious torment, and felt a strange and perfect sympathy of woe. The cold, big drops of a nameless terror, were on his brow, and his bosom heaved with a mighty effort, as if to throw off an oppressive and intolerable burthen. He started up, amazed at his sufferings. The wildness of the night was in unison with his feelings! for the calm serenity of the evening had been succeeded by fitful gusts of wind. The moon shone brightly on her distant throne; But, awful clouds, of every portentous form, were now blending in the thick folds of one common

darkness, and anon, dividing and careering along the sky, as if hurried away by some living impulse. Impelled by the fire in his brain, De Clifford threw up the casement, leaped on the leads of a portico beneath his window, and descended, as he had often done on happier occasions, by one of the pillars into the garden. He wandered he knew not whither.

CHAPTER V.

"A single tear he did not shed—
 He did not strike his throbbing breast—
 You saw him clasp his bursting head ;—
 An idiot-laugh proclaim'd the rest."

J. W. Cunningham.

AMONG the scenes which diffuse through the contemplative mind a pleasing melancholy, there is none which awakens a deeper interest than a village church-yard. The Poet and the Christian, though in different ways, feel its influence, and surrender themselves to its power. To the one it presents the long roll of years gone by. "The dead, both small and great," stand before him, invested with the charm of ideal existence, and all the incidents in the brief tale of human life, from the cradle to the tomb, crowd upon his imagination. He luxuriates in the past.

The other looks upon the scene with emotions inspired by a nobler philanthropy. To

him it breathes of hope. He feels the dust of departed worth and goodness moving beneath his feet. The solemn and appalling images, rising from the tomb, in passing through his vision, are moulded, softened, and beautified into forms of surpassing loveliness and glory. Death and life appear to him mysteriously consorted, and each green hillock speaks to his heart, with all the thrilling tenderness of the best affections that proceed from their conjunction. While surveying the hallowed receptacle of so many weary pilgrims, he is delightfully conscious that they are covered by the "wings of motherly humanity," and that her children thus gathered within her tender shade, will one day emerge in all the undecaying vigour of deathless immortality. The sacred fane, around which they have found their last repose, as it points significantly to heaven, conducts his thoughts to its blissful mansions; and, sustained by the "sure and certain hope" of their resurrection to eternal life, he devoutly exclaims, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

The place of Sepulture at Beaulieu is the most retired spot in its deep seclusion,

"The loveliest nook in all that lovely glen,"

and possesses not only the charm of romantic solitude, but is venerable, as it forms part of the demesne of the Abbey, whose dilapidated and ivied walls, standing in craggy and isolated portions, declare its remote antiquity and pristine magnificence. At no great distance from the more modern burying-place, fragments of sculp-

tured tombs, and massive stones, with inscriptions, rendered illegible by the foot of time, project above the surface of the ground, partially covered with moss, and grey and mouldering from the storms of many centuries. But later generations repose, where no vestiges exist of these proud but humbled trophies of departed greatness—

“Where no dark cypress casts a doleful gloom,
No blighting yew sheds poison o’er the tomb; .
But, white and red, with intermingling flowers,
The graves look beautiful in sun and showers.”

One evening, while the sexton was busied in his avocation in this rural cemetery, a figure, unshorn, ghastly, and most miserable in his whole appearance, approached him, and with a voice, hollow and broken, demanded to know whose mortal remains were about to be interred. Without raising his head, or suspending his employment, the grave-digger replied, “Miss Julia’s!”

“Julia’s!” echoed the stranger in a tone of anguish which roused the attention of the honest rustic; who, eyeing him with a look of surprise, exclaimed

“Aye, master, mayhap you *knowed* the poor lady?”

“Julia Wilmington!” uttered the stranger in accents tremulous and scarcely audible.

“The same, master, the very same,” rejoined the labourer, with evident emotion, ‘and her’s is a sad and dismal story;—Ah! who’d ha’ thought it, who’d ha’ thought it,” he continued, shaking his silver locks, and wiping the starting tear.

He then resumed for a moment his unwilling toil ; but was soon forced to desist.

" Ah ! " said he, pausing, " 'tis hard, very hard work this. Why, I've been sexton here, man and boy, this fifty year—ever *sin* old Goodman Coulter *give* up through long of the *rheumatiz* ; and never, never did a grave cost me so much trouble before. Somehow there's no getting on. Every thing's out o' sorts ; the ground seems as stiff and as stubborn as a hard frost ; and the tools are 'all so dull there's no using on 'em. I must give up, for I ha'n't heart to go on."

He paused, and leaned on his spade, apparently regardless of his auditor. Both seemed, for the moment, unconscious of each other's presence, and absorbed in their own thoughts. The old man was the first to speak ; and when he did, it was with that elevation of sentiment and expression which distinguishes the conversation of the pious poor, when religion either awakens or hallows their feelings.

" Well ! " he pursued, " well ! why should I take on so. One might as well weep for the angels in heaven as for her. Ah ! Heaven was her home, and holy angels her only fit companions. She was too pure, too good, for such a wicked world as this. But," he said, " there is one for whom we should weep ; aye, I could weep tears of blood for *him*. Poor Master Clifford ! well do I remember when Miss Julia and he used to come and sit in my dame's chimney-corner, or afore the garden gate of a summer's evening, and talk, that it did one's heart good to hear 'em—they were so young, so handsome, and so good. Oh ! it was a blessed sight. And

we all blessed them both, and thought how happy they two would be ; but," he added, " how is the gold changed, and the fine gold become dim. Master Clifford went to College for his learning, as they said. Well, and what did he learn there, but to forget the instructions of his youth—to forsake God—to despise his holy word—and to set himself up as wiser than his Maker ! And what was the end on't ? Why, the end of these things was death—the death of poor Miss Julia ; but oh ! it's sinful to weep for her—she's gone now where sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away. Its' for him, indeed, we must weep. There's no forgetting him, as poor Mr. Evelyn said this morning when he came to our cottage, and asked so kindly if we could tell any news of him.—' Pray,' said he, ' have you heard any thing of *my* Edward ?' ' Sir,' said I, ' he was indeed yours once ;' ' but now—Now,' said he, ' he's more mine than ever. Forsaken outcast ! prodigal ! as he is—he is still mine—more than ever mine.' And then he compared him so beautifully to the Prodigal in the Gospel, saying, that *his* father knew *him* when he was yet very far off, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. ' Ah !' said he, ' could I but see my poor boy returning home, however distant, however far, yet only returning, how eagerly would I hasten to welcome, to bless him ;'—but, master, what makes you tremble, and look so deadly pale ?"

The damp chill of horror was, indeed, on the stranger's brow, and he looked, ghastly as death—his lips moved—he muttered something of Julia—laughed hideously, and staggered back—

wards on the ground. The terrified sexton instantly ran to his assistance; but how was he struck with amazement, when he recognized, distorted, and almost obliterated, the features of De Clifford! His first impulse was to remove him as speedily as possible to his own cottage, and reflection convinced him, that as the funeral of Julia was to take place on the morrow, this was the most prudent step on which he could resolve. But it was with difficulty, and by a variety of long and persevering efforts, that he could rouse him from his death-like stupor. At length, he awoke as from a trance, and suffered himself to be led to his companion's abode. The inmates of this humble dwelling received their unexpected guest with the genuine kindness of rustic hospitality. But when they learnt that the emaciated, half-conscious being, before them, was De Clifford, they were overwhelmed with grief and astonishment. Delicacy, however, induced them to suppress their feelings in his presence; and by every soothing attention in their power they calmed the perturbation of his spirits, and prevailed upon him to accept their poor accommodations for the night.

Exhausted with hunger, fatigue, and intense emotion, Nature yielded to a slight repose; but, in the course of the evening, fever began to rage in his veins—he became delirious—and the united exertions of the family could scarcely retain him in his chamber.

The good wife was shocked as he poured forth torrents of infidelity and blasphemy, the fearful import of which she did not fully comprehend; and anon, she would weep in sympa-

thy, when he changed the tone of desperation into the softened thrilling accents of bereaved and hopeless affection. The night was spent by the cottagers in watching over their charge, who, as the morning advanced, sunk, from very weariness, into a kind of fitful slumber. At length, he seemed to breathe with less difficulty, and though on his countenance was impressed the awful emphasis of despair, the sad consciousness of misery was lost in temporary forgetfulness. Pleased with what they deemed a favorable symptom, his kind attendants quietly resigned him to the care of a neighbour, while they proceeded to the church to make the necessary preparations for the interment of Julia. The circumstances of that event the following letter will disclose :

LOUISA TO MRS. DORMER.

“Yes, my Emily, the last kind offices of affection have been performed. For the first time in my life I have had courage to look into an open grave, and to witness the heart-rending compact of ‘dust to dust,’ and ‘ashes to ashes.’ Oh! what a union! and what a shocking process is that which is now resolving the lovely form of Julia into the common earth, which closes it from our view for ever! And to this we must all come. ‘The worm shall feed sweetly on us,’ and even the shadow of Humanity must disappear under the ravages of this insatiable spoiler—I say, the shadow of Humanity; for, after all, it is only this which is committed to the tomb. It is a sad illusion which

leads us to identify the essential Being with its accidental associations, and to imagine, that all we love lies mouldering in the grave. We cannot realize to our feelings what is so repugnant to our impressions, that the sepulchre contains *only* lifeless, perishable flesh. But so it is—the spirit is not there. Oh! no, my Julia!

“ ————— with powers
Such as the cherubim,”

it is thine to gaze upon the very throne of God. With awful steps thou hast risen to the holiest sanctuary in the heaven of heavens. Yes!

“ ————— Thou hast first
Begun the travel of Eternity ;
I gaze amid the stars,
And think that thou art there,
Unfettered, as the thought that follows thee.”

“ The morning of the funeral was grey and sombre, and well accorded with the gloom which death never fails to diffuse around it. The pall was supported by six young women, dressed in white. Mr. Evelyn preceded the bier; Mrs. Wilmington followed as chief mourner; and myself, with the Evelyns and the children of the school, filled up the train. The bell tolled in the distance at solemn intervals, and the procession moved slowly along, while the trees on either side of the path shed sad tokens of their desolation upon us with every breeze which stirred their sear and yellow foliage. It was a scene to touch the heart. My spirit held communion with the departed, and I was absorbed in pleasing melancholy, till roused by the mild yet

majestic voice of our venerable friend, whose enunciation of 'I am the resurrection and the life,' carried my thoughts forward to the end of all things. My imagination kindled—the scene expanded into the sublimity of the last day. The bright and awful form of the Son of Man, as he is described in the Apocalypse, seemed to tower before me in all the grandeur of omnipotence. The dead appeared to be moved at his presence ; and I was half conscious of the instantaneous change which swallows up death in victory. Before me the golden thrones arose, sustained by the hands of Cherubim, and I heard the deep Hosannahs, of innumerable multitudes, as the sound of many waters. The new heavens were unrolled to my astonished view, and the new earth shed forth its immortal fragrance, as if to welcome the universal empire of righteousness and peace. From this dream of rapture, I was awoke by the resting of the coffin in the chancel, and the continuation of the service.

“ The fine reasoning of St. Paul, on the subject of the resurrection, banished the illusions of my fancy, and fixed my understanding in mute adoring attention. Presumptuous curiosity was turned into the humility of faith, and I believed that the dead would rise though I could not develop the mystery, nor ascertain with what body they would come. We quitted the church, and repaired to the grave ; and, while the words 'sure and certain hope,' were in the act of being pronounced, the glorious orb of day, bursting from the mists which had concealed it, rose in cloudless splendor and beauty, as if to afford its pledge of that great day, when the Sun of

HAPPINESS

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all I be to hear, that the dark

Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and resuscitate from the sleep of death the countless myriads of mankind.

“The scene, my Emily, can be but faintly, distantly portrayed in your mind—in mine it will live for ever. The sorrowing group around the tomb—the children weeping a loss which their tender age could scarcely estimate; the venerable pastor, struggling with his grief, and repeating the sacred text in a voice enfeebled more by sorrow than by age; the mother, now altogether bereaved, wearing on her interesting countenance the fortitude of resignation, mingled with its meekness, presented a spectacle which time can only perpetuate in my remembrance. Yes! my departed Julia! as I stood over thy grave, and beheld the silent earth closed on one so shortly known to me, yet so greatly endeared, I formed a sacred and solemn resolution, that the anniversary of thy burial, the return of that day which saw thy beauteous remains committed to the tomb, shall be observed by me as an interval of retirement and devotion, which no change of circumstances or of station shall induce me to violate. To me, it shall ever be as one of the days of the Son of Man.

“The service was now ended. The assistants had rendered their last mournful offices. Mrs. Wilmington, who, during a long interval, had restrained her feelings, had absorbed the Parent in the Christian, now relieved herself by a flood of natural tears; when, as she was turning slowly away, one whom a painter might copy for a Lazarus rising from his grave, advanced with wild demeanor and hurried steps. Judge, my

Emily, of our surprise and consternation. With incredible swiftness he rushed upon the sexton, seized his implements, and, with maniac fury, began to remove the earth from the half-closed sepulchre. Horror-struck at this unnatural outrage, I clung to Mrs. Wilmington, whose firmness at this trying moment, did not forsake her. Mr. Evelyn, in a tone which blended authority with pity, merely exclaimed 'Edward!' when the haggard spectre immediately desisted. The mattock fell from his hand, and the look of wild desperation was changed to the vacant stare of idiocy. He was conveyed to the Vicarage, where medical skill and the unwearied attentions of friendship, have, as yet, failed to restore even the dawn of reason. Not a ray of intellect beams from that eye which was once all intelligence; and only the lines of ruin are to be traced in that countenance which, but a few weeks since, was remarkable for its fine and powerful expression. Yet is the case not deemed entirely hopeless, the shock, though violent, may not prove fatal. We are all deeply affected. Grief, for departed excellence, is mingled with anxiety for one whose fate is oscillating in suspense, who, though lost to himself, is still regarded with the tenderest interest by those whom his aberrations have most injured. I shall not, so soon as I intended, leave this scene of affliction. The school of sorrow is profitable; and I have already learnt many valuable lessons in the house of mourning. Adieu, my Emily. My heart clings to you as my earliest friend; and most happy shall I be to hear, that the dark

cloud which began to settle upon your domestic prosperity, has passed away.

"Your ever affectionate

"LOUISA."

CHAPTER VI.

"——— Oh ! for a voice
Of Comfort !—for a ray of hope from Heaven !
A hand, that from these billows of despair
May reach and snatch him 'ere he sink engulf'd."
Southey.

MISANTHROPY of principle cannot long exist in a heart tenderly susceptible of the charities of life, without either transforming its nature, or destroying its happiness. Repulsive pride, and inexorable selfishness, must be the elements of that bosom where infidelity finds a congenial home. He that despises religion and renounces hope, ought to be denaturalized in his feelings as well as in his opinions. De Clifford wanted this essential qualification of an unbeliever. His mind was the dupe of sophistry, his imagination was charged with all the gloomy extravagance of the impious school to which he had strangely attached himself; but the kindly influence of humanity could not be entirely subdued; and a passion, cherished in the morning of existence, strengthened by a thousand fond associations, and hallowed into virtue by the moral beauty of its object, lived an inextinguishable fire in his breast. However dimmed and weakened by

the damp and pestilential atmosphere, thrown around it by his detestable philosophy, it still survived. Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. This only virtue remained, as the sheet-anchor of his soul, and saved him from a total wreck. To his new principles, with a species of infernal enthusiasm, he could sacrifice character, connexions, and even the dearest object of his love ; but when they required him to immolate the passion itself, he found that it was identified with his reason—with his life. He crossed seas, and wandered over continents—plunged into solitude—and rushed into society, with the sole object of eradicating from his heart this last vestige of goodness. But it was impossible. Julia, whom he had madly renounced, and who became more endeared by the injuries he had inflicted upon her, haunted his imagination. Sometimes he beheld her blooming in all her loveliness ; but more frequently it was a vision of pale and dejected beauty, gradually melting into uncircumscribed shade. Torn with conjecture, as to her fate, yet dreading to inquire, he resolved on a visit to Beaulieu, supposing that the Wilmingtons were in the Isle of Wight. He arrived, as we have seen, at a juncture awfully critical. His mind, already agitated, was ill prepared to meet the dismal shock with which it was assailed ; and, in the dreadful concussion, reason was scared from her throne. He first passed through a horror of great darkness, from which he slowly emerged into a scene of shadows, where every object was indistinct and colourless ; nor would any thing at that moment have awakened him

into a world of reality, but the opening grave of Julia. This quickened the current of his feelings, and he experienced the pangs of returning consciousness—the intenseness of mental agony. It was too much for his weak and exhausted frame; and the sad train of circumstances, which we have detailed, immediately ensued.

More than a week elapsed 'ere the eyes of this living statue assumed any appearance but that of glassy and unmeaning listlessness. One morning, however, as the sun threw its radiance on a fine portrait of Julia, which had been purposely placed in his chamber, with the hope of exciting him, he was observed by Mr. Evelyn to gaze upon it with something like intelligence—a half-formed smile brightened on his countenance; but it was momentary, and in an instant his face relaxed to its habitual vacancy. Yet did this transient gleam afford a pledge, that the intellectual orb was not totally quenched, and that it was possible it might again shine with its pristine lustre. How fondly this expectation was cherished by the friends of De Clifford, those only can imagine who have been placed in similar circumstances, or who have watched, with mute and dread anxiety, the taper of life apparently flickering in its socket, when an unusual steadiness, and an increasing power in the flame, have awakened them to hope and gladness.

Mrs. Wilmington failed not to visit, and to treat with maternal tenderness, the destroyer of her last earthly hope. She felt the injury, but she felt it as a Christian; and when she saw the author of her desolation suffering the fearful pe-

nalty of his crime, the pity of her heart triumphed over every feeling of resentment; and the tear of affection trembled in her eye, when she expressed to Mr. Evelyn her sad apprehension, that she should be bereaved of both her children. With Louisa, and her venerable friend, she spent many hours of every day in De Clifford's chamber; and when she learnt, that the portrait of her sainted Julia had drawn the spirit of consciousness back, though but for a moment, to its accustomed seat, she resolved on an expedient which she hoped would not fail of success. It was, that Louisa, in an adjoining room, should sing to the harp of Julia a favourite air, to which her lover, in the days of their affection, used to listen with the fondest delight. Louisa readily undertook the melancholy task, while her companions remained to watch its effect upon their patient. The tones of the instrument, in the short and exquisite prelude, seemed to charm the dull sense, which the soothing accents of kindness had in vain endeavoured to excite. During the first stanza, he raised his head, and his eye once more rested upon the portrait. A conflict between idiocy and reason discovered itself in a bewildered look of anxiety, and the issue appeared for a few moments doubtful; but the power of the music at length caught and rivetted his wandering attention. The faculties of hearing and of vision assailed at the same moment, roused his torpid memory, and a train of pleasing associations proclaimed the partial return of intellect. It came as a dream, and spoke only of happiness. To his imagination, the picture was the living Ju-

lia. The harp, the voice, the song, were her's. He was wrapt in the Elysium of Love. As if transported back to the morning of life, he felt all its freshness, and was charmed with all its beauty. The music ceased; but he still dreamed on, till, overcome with emotion, he gently sunk into the arms of sleep.

The ladies retired, and Mr. Evelyn continued at "the Post of Observation," dreading and hoping what the next waking interval might disclose. A few hours elapsed, and his suspense terminated in certainty. The mind was recovered to intelligence, but it seemed to be the intelligence of despair. Every pleasing sentiment vanished with his slumbers; and De Clifford awoke to a full consciousness of his guilt and desolation. He felt as if standing on the cold dark verge of mortal existence. The dreariness of the past made him shiver to look back;—the future!—but the future was to him a blank, and a nothing. It had been so in the hours of health, and when sustained by beings as impious as himself; but now, in the moment, when flesh and heart failed, and dismal solitude spread its loneliness around him, his infidelity was troubled. It veered towards scepticism; and scepticism at length inclined to faith. The hereafter, he had so long denied, arose to his view, and the nearness and the distance alike appalled him. He touched the confines of another world—but how to gain a firm footing—how to guide himself along the immeasurable shore—whether fearful solitude, or torturing society, awaited him—whether the trackless desert, or the everlasting monotony of pain in the bottomless pit, were to

be his doom, he could not tell. Of one thing he felt confident, that within him was a deathless spirit; and though the tyrant, called Death, seemed to hold him in his relentless grasp, yet, that that spirit defied his power, and laughed his terrors to scorn. But something more mysterious, something that it was an agony worse than death, to look upon, stood over him. It was the angel of the future; and his very soul shrank from his presence with unutterable dismay. "Not speechless, though he spoke not," for some time he lay chilled, and bathed with horror, without affording to his vigilant attendant any very decisive evidence of his being awake; but a groan, like that when a soul departs, soon convinced him, that the mind of the sufferer laboured under the weight of some dire calamity. One glance was sufficient to confirm the dismal fact; but how to administer relief, if relief were indeed possible, he was perplexed to know. He had only a choice of difficulties. Reason might again fall the victim of too much excitement; yet were the moments precious. It was an interval which, if lost, might never return; an effort might save a soul from death, yet to make it was extremely hazardous. The good man prayed fervently for divine guidance; and then, with a calm benevolent look of Heaven, he bent his face towards that of De Clifford. "Edward," he whispered, "you are with us again—you are at home. Nay, turn not from me—bury the past in forgetfulness—you are forgiven—you are loved."

"Torture! torture!" was the only reply. Mr. Evelyn paused, determining to wait for some

spontaneous expression of feeling, before he ventured to address him again. A long-drawn sigh intimated the continuance of mental anguish.

"The hand of Heaven is on me," at length, exclaimed the sufferer, in sullen accents; "but I will brave its worst," he added, in a tone of desperation.

"Will you to the last then," interposed Mr. Evelyn, "defy the kindness of friendship—of your best friend?"

"I have no friend," was the answer: "Even Julia is become my accusing spirit, and there is not a being in Heaven that is not armed against me."

"Alas!" said Mr. Evelyn, "how soon is the madness of Unbelief changed into the weakness of Credulity! How nearly allied are Presumption and Despair!"

"Ah!" rejoined De Clifford, "Folly made me an Infidel. Conscience now makes me a Believer; but not a Christian. My creed is a short and a terrible one. It is comprised in a single sentence. I know that there is a God, and I feel that he is my enemy; and I am a practical Believer, which cannot be said of all Christians. I do not defy his goodness; but I am ready to endure his wrath—aye, in any world and in any form in which he may choose to inflict it."

"When you avow your conviction of the existence of a Deity," said Mr. Evelyn, "your belief is justified by evidence which only ideots and madmen do not perceive and readily admit; but when you conclude, that God is your enemy, the inference is altogether unsupported,

and without even the shadow of proof. No being, who lives under an economy of Mercy, is warranted in supposing that he is singled out as a victim doomed to be unblest by its kindness. Before he suffer himself to be possessed by a thought so horrible, it ought to be the subject of a special revelation, confirmed by miracles and wonders as stupendous as those which attest the benevolent mission of the Son of God. Your infatuated daring of a vengeance, the full terrors of which no creature has ever felt, is but the raving of insanity—of a distempered state of feeling, produced by the desperation of guilt. When “the great day of his wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?” Who knoweth the power of his anger? That day is not yet arrived—that power sleeps as a thunderbolt in the hand of love; and even your crimes have not been sufficient to disturb its profound repose.”

“What I feel,” replied De Clifford, “cannot be mere natural agony, nor is it mere natural strength that supports me under it. It is God who torments and sustains me.”

“But not in wrath,” rejoined Mr. E.; “it is the chastisement of a compassionate Father, and not the vengeance of an insulted Judge. Your heart is pierced to the very core, and you are thus stricken by Omnipotence; but the very hand that wounds is stretched forth to save; and the misery which you feel, is the necessary prelude of your happiness. Presumption is a dæmon that never leaves its victim without casting him violently on the ground, and shaking him with a thousand terrors. Infidelity is not to be charmed out of the soul by the still small

voice of love ; it must be driven thence by the lightnings and the thunder of its own terrific darkness. Humility, which accompanies Faith, must be the result of utter destitution. Every human prop must fall. The Unbeliever, overwhelmed with disappointment, with weakness, with wretchedness, must be brought to know, that what he deemed his principles, are not able to sustain him—that, indeed, they were not principles, but only the deceitful dictates of a sensual heart, which he had mistaken for principles. Till he is made to experience this, Reason will not convince him of the truth of Religion, and he will reject with proud disdain its consolations. But as he approaches the sincere hour, when things begin to appear in their genuine character, when the world which had deceived him is vanishing from his sight, and that eternal existence, which he had hitherto despised and professed to disbelieve, assumes the air of an awful reality, then will he be conscious of anxiety and alarm. Then will he no longer cavil at the evidences, or hesitate at the incredible doctrines of religion. He will believe and tremble. It is not its evidences, but its comforts, which he will then require. But even at such a moment, the strong temptations of despair may beset his soul, and, instead of imploring mercy, he may conclude that he has placed himself beyond its pale—that it is in vain for him to hope—that even infinite clemency cannot extend to the enormity of his guilt. Such appear to be the gloomy apprehensions of your mind ; but, how little do you know of the divine character—how little of the

kindness and love of God our Saviour? If you are excluded from forgiveness, the fearful act of excision is your own. God is waiting to be gracious to you. I have received you with the open arms of affection; and God is infinitely more compassionate than I am. O Edward!—he is the Father of Mercies. In very tenderness he now afflicts you.

“He wounds you for his mercy’s sake;
He wounds to heal.”

“No, no, it cannot be,” was the eager reply to this affectionate address. “I will not now supplicate—I have rejected the Redeemer. In the season of health, and surrounded with all the enjoyments of life, I not only asserted my independence, but I ridiculed his authority; and now, in my sickness and desolation, it would be cowardice to yield. His vengeance has overtaken me, and it is in vain for me to struggle with destiny. Let the Angel of Punishment seize me. I am ready.”

“Madness! Impiety!” exclaimed Mr. Evelyn. “This sullen humour of despair is the worst symptom of that moral disease which has so long infected you, and which is now hastening to a crisis. Yet, even at this dread moment, seek the good Physician. You believe in his power?”

“Yes!” replied De Clifford, with energy, “I dare not disbelieve; it is my curse—my agony.”

“And yet,” said Mr. Evelyn, “Faith is the richest boon of Heaven. How strangely you

pervert its nature. The omnipotence of the Redeemer is omnipotence to save. He is able to save to the uttermost. Do you believe this?"

"Certainly," was the answer; "those whom He wills to save."

"And He wills to save the guilty and the lost," was the prompt reply.

A look of hopeless dissent, and evident reluctance to prolong the subject, discovered to Mr. Evelyn, that the gloom of De Clifford's mind was for that time impervious to the rays of Divine Mercy, and that, however acutely he felt the misery of guilt, he was totally insensible to impressions favourable to his salvation. This induced him to suspend his friendly endeavours, and to leave him to the reflections and the calm of solitude.

CHAPTER VII.

"A lonely mother of the Christian land;
Her lord—the Captain of the British band,
Amidst the slaughter of his soldiers lay." *Campbell.*

THE sullen daring of infinite wrath which gave a character of insanity to the mind of De Clifford, as it gradually emerged from listlessness to feeling, after a few days yielded to apprehensive dread; and he realized what St. Paul has described as a fearful looking for a judgment and fiery indignation. Despair gave place to terror.

In this state he one evening cast an imploring look on Mr. Evelyn, who seized the favourable moment, and once more endeavoured to inspire him with hope. With this view he exhibited the doctrines of Christianity in all their adaptation to the guilt and wretchedness of man; and descanted with peculiar earnestness on the grace which distinguishes the chief of sinners. He dwelt with glowing eloquence on the personal character of the Saviour; and drew so fine a portrait of the meek and yet majestic compassion of his nature, that the heart of his auditor was evidently touched. The marble bosom, softened into humanity, heaved with feelings of unwonted tenderness. The love of Christ, in dying, even for his murderers, and supplicating with his expiring breath the pardon of their heinous ingratitude and cruelty, was irresistible. Now he wept—

“————— and at the gush
Of these first tears, it seem'd as if his heart
From a long winter's icy thrall let loose,
Had opened to the genial influences
Of Heaven.”

Mr. Evelyn felt in sympathy with that joy which wets the fair brows and beauteous locks of Cherubim when a sinner repents. With eager alacrity he spoke comfort to the penitent, and adjured him to lay down the burthen of his sins at that cross where he had first discovered that their guilt could be forgiven. Infidelity, with its accursed train of horrors, vanished before the light of heavenly hope, and its glorious visions of immortal felicity. The dark

spirit was cheered by this new and blessed influence, and its agitations subsided into peace. Health and hope returned together.

It was during the weeks of convalescence, and on an occasion when the sustaining power of the Gospel was the subject of conversation, that Mrs. Wilmington was induced to give the following narrative of her life; through the whole of which Christianity had been her guiding-star in every difficulty; her bow of promise in every storm; her spring of consolation in every sorrow. Her auditors were Mr. Evelyn, Louisa, and De Clifford.

"Life," she remarked, in reply to an observation of Mr. Evelyn, "has been to me a bitter draught, and had it not been for the salutary and soothing ingredient of Religion, which was early infused into it, I should have loathed it, and exclaimed with the suffering Patriarch, 'Strangling is better than life.'"

"Just at the moment when I could appreciate the loss, I was bereaved of my father. To him I was indebted for my first devout impressions. His example was a silent, but an attractive excellence; and his death was at once the display and the triumph of his principles. I never can forget the calm majesty with which he spoke of his dissolution, and with which he awaited the last assault of the king of terrors. He reminded my weeping mother, that her 'Maker was her husband,' and assured me that the Father of the fatherless dwelt in Heaven, and could never die; that he had committed me to His care, and that He would never forsake me. And then his exalted spirit, as if obeying an invisible sum-

mons, with a graceful dignity put off the body as a clog and an incumbrance, and soared away to brighter regions. For some time I gazed with speechless agony on the form and features of the dear departed, and then retired to meditate and pray.

"The grief of my surviving parent required all the aid of piety, and all the kind attentions of filial affection and friendship, to soothe and mitigate it. She struggled long with her feelings, and I seriously apprehended that she would have fallen the victim of the mysterious sympathy sometimes found in superior natures, which cannot suffer a kindred heart to be cold in the grave without imparting its withering chill to the living bosom. Happily for me, my fears were groundless. Heaven graciously afforded its assistance to the widowed mourner, and she returned with a chastened spirit to discharge the duties of life, the principal of which regarded my education. For this task my mother was eminently qualified. From her infancy she had lived in a circle where serious studies and dignified pursuits, instead of being abandoned to a paltry and effeminate derision, were considered as indispensable to the true elevation of the female character. She combined a taste for learning and the arts with the most active kindness. To a quick perception of character, she united a masculine force of understanding, and possessed and exercised all her talents without affecting any superiority over the rest of her sex, or forgetting for a single instant the delicacy and reserve, which are its brightest ornaments. She never aimed to be the Dictator of Criticism, or

the Oracle of Taste. Her opinions were always offered with modesty, but were uniformly considered as decisive. The qualities of her understanding were not more respected than the virtues of her heart were admired and loved. She "did alms," but they were not seen of men ; she was the friend of the friendless ; her ear was open to every tale of sorrow, and she sympathized with the distressed in all the varieties of their woe ; and all this she did under the influence of religious principle ; the feelings of her heart, and the treasures of her mind, were hallowed by Christian piety. She derived all her motives of action, of magnanimity, of benevolence, and of resignation, from the love of Christ. Her soul was the altar from which this sacred fire glowed and ascended in all the fragrance of acceptable incense to the throne of God and the Lamb. Such was my mother ! Under her affectionate care I grew up to the age of woman. She knew the natural tendencies of my disposition, and was most anxious to regulate them according to her own standard of goodness. She saw that a vivid imagination and a warm heart, by hurrying me into friendships and attachments without the prerequisite knowledge of the individuals, and disposing me from such materials to create a paradise of my own, would expose me to the constant danger of giving earth a disproportionate share of my regard, and thus of piercing my heart through with many sorrows. Her cautions were wise ; but the season of youth is not the season of wisdom, and my natural character led me to consider reserved suspicion as almost a vice. Like most

girls, I was the slave of prepossessions and prejudices. My friends were angels; and where others only disliked, I hated. The first thing I intrusted to a casual acquaintance was my confidence; and to every one that I regarded with fondness, I committed my happiness. You will not be surprised to learn that clouds of sadness and disappointment obscured the morning of my days. My kind mother watched my bubbles of bliss in their rapid progress to sudden extinction, and affectionately took advantage of my grief on such occasions to correct the propensity which gave it birth. Providence, likewise, the God whom my father assured me would never forsake me, seemed to arrange his dispensations towards me with the same view. Whenever my heart wandered from him, its chief good, its only felicity, his chastening rod, followed me. Every object, in which I took an excessive interest, an interest beyond its intrinsic worth, was either removed or embittered;—and so it has been ever since. How beautifully, how mournfully, has the lovely Hinda expressed this stern, yet merciful law of my destiny:—

“ Oh ! ever thus, from childhood’s hour,
I’ve seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never lov’d a tree or flow’r,
But ’twas the first to fade away.
I never nurs’d a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me—it was sure to die !”

“ I well remember that my first passion was romantic, that is, it was in the highest degree imprudent, and would have been fatal to my

happiness through life, and perhaps for ever, had not religion triumphed over folly ; and the wisdom of my friends been fully equal to their affection. My love spent itself in unavailing sorrow, and my health had well nigh fallen a sacrifice to its violence. I look back on the peril which I then escaped, even at this distant moment, with trembling gratitude. It was the severest disappointment I ever felt, but it was the most salutary. I was not wrecked. I saw the insidious rock ere it was too late, and learnt that smooth seas, and clement skies are not always indications of security, or the certain pledge of a prosperous voyage. I was taught too impressively ever to forget the lesson that my own heart was a faithless pilot, and unworthy to be trusted.

About two years afterwards, Colonel Wilmington, the son of my father's earliest friend, and who, to a graceful and manly person, added every charm of character, paid me those particular attentions which, from an honourable man, are undoubted proofs of affection. To those attentions I was not insensible ; and my judgment sanctioned the choice of my heart. We were married. I was happy in obtaining the friendship of my husband, who, from the first moment of our union, regarded me with the respectful deference which is due from one rational being to another. He loved me with a uniform and *practical* affection. There was a sedate reasonableness even in his passions. His judgment on every subject was almost intuitively correct, and his heart generally obeyed the dictates of his understanding. Heaven gave him

to me as my guardian angel. It is true, my natural ardor sometimes betrayed me into impatience under his salutary restraint. But I never dissented from his opinions, or acted contrary to his advice, without in the end discovering my own folly. I confess, that this chagrined me not a little; it is so disagreeable to be always in the wrong. Yet did he never exact from me the mortifying acknowledgment. At first, I peevishly imagined that he could not love me—that he could not love at all. But a thousand nameless and delicate proofs of attachment, renewed every day, and occasionally revealing a tenderness which seemed incompatible with the general coldness of his disposition, delightfully convinced me of my error. I wanted the poetry of love; my husband was only acquainted with its truth, and to this I attribute the uninterrupted happiness which we enjoyed in each other. I soon understood his character, and became gradually assimilated to it. Had there not been an original dissimilarity between us, it is probable we should have known but little of domestic felicity. St. Pierre's Doctrine of Contrasts, was in us strikingly illustrated. Our opposite tendencies mutually corrected each other. The one appeared to be all mind, the other all heart; and, as we uniformly acted in concert, we formed together a tolerably interesting and useful character. We both derived our principles from the same source, and placed our ultimate happiness in the same object. Religion furnished us with the motive, the rule, and the reward of virtue. It was at once the bond and the charm of our union. While it described and

enforced our duties, it multiplied and heightened our enjoyments; preventing weariness in the one, and satiety in the other.

“Colonel Wilmington was early in life sent out to India. There he acquired his fortune and his rank; and thither he returned with me soon after our marriage. Parting from my mother was a severe trial. She wept—a sad, alas! a final adieu! The greatest alleviation of her sorrow was, that she had resigned me into the hands of such a husband. I was sustained by the fond hope of meeting her again, and shedding the mild lustre of filial gratitude on the evening of her days. Happy ignorance of the future! in which we dream of joys to come as a mitigation of present anguish. I saw the white cliffs of my native shore dwindle into a speck, and strained my eyes in vain to distinguish between the distant cloud and the retiring land. A thousand emotions rushed upon my heart. I felt as one utterly bereaved. The scenes of my youth—my joys and sorrows—the associations of my entire being seemed to be violently, hopelessly wrested from me. In my husband now centered kindred and home. He was my only world.

I need not trouble you with the incidents of a voyage which was unusually rapid and pleasant. In a short time my melancholy subsided, and my spirits recovered their tone. The loveliness of night on the ocean often charmed me into silent rapture. Above, around me, all was favourable to devotion. In the trackless deep, my father's God did not forsake me. Every sound of nature was his voice—every form of beauty was his

image. The heavens displayed his glories, and the waters reflected them with a softened effulgence. Through these hallowed mediums, I enjoyed the high communion of a soul with its Creator. Nor was it till I arrived in India, and found myself surrounded with European impieties and native superstitions, that I seemed to have left the true God, and to have wandered into a region from which he was excluded.

“The far-boasted Christianity of Britain was, at the period I refer to, almost unknown in the Indian peninsula. It was, in fact, confined to a few Missionaries, and their converts, who, being refused the protection of the British government, were obliged to seek an asylum at Serampore, a settlement belonging to his Danish Majesty; and even here they were threatened and harassed by the Christian authorities at Calcutta. Tippoo, in derision, was accustomed to designate the English, ‘the people without a God;’ nor was the reproach a calumny. Not a form, not a vestige of religion, could the strictest vigilance ever detect among the European population of these immense districts. It was only in their oaths and imprecations, that any distinct reference to a Deity was ever made. In the impious, immoral beings around me, ‘unbaptized by crossing the ocean,’ I was shocked to recognize my countrymen, and wondered that Englishmen could so soon forget the land and the habits of their fathers. The Hindoo idolaters exhibited a still more disgusting spectacle. I looked in vain for the mild virtues of which I had heard so much in Christian Britain, and saw only the most nauseous and appalling forms of vice and

cruelty; and these the offspring of that accursed spirit which, by the millions of Hindostan, is dignified with the name of Religion.

“ Perhaps no fabric of human fraud has ever been devised so deadly as the Braminical, so heart-hardening, so injurious to society, so pernicious to the moral nature of man. Well might one of the Missionaries, who daily witnessed its horrors, when writing home to his friends, exclaim—‘ Do not send men of any compassion here, for you will break their hearts;’ and well did he immediately add, in the true fervor of inspired genius—‘ Do send men full of compassion here, where many perish with cold, many for lack of bread, and millions for lack of knowledge. This country abounds with misery. Oh, miserable sight! I have found the pathway stopped up by the sick and wounded people, perishing with hunger, and that in a populous neighbourhood, where numbers pass by, some singing, others talking; but none showing mercy, as though they were dying weeds, and not dying men.’

“ Nothing is more common in England than to hear well-educated persons speak in terms of approbation of the Hindoo Mythology, and to represent it as a harmless, if not a beneficent superstition. Such ignorance is inexcusable, because it must be wilful—it must proceed from a criminal determination not to be informed.

“ During the few years of my residence in India, from the nature of Colonel Wilmington’s profession, and from the important and confidential services to which he was called, I had many opportunities of witnessing the atrocities of this abominable delusion. I have more than once

beheld widows consumed on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands. An instance of pre-éminent cruelty lives in my imagination, and the recollection of it at this moment chills my blood with horror. The dreadful scene had not the least appearance of a religious ceremony ; the poor victim was treated with the most brutal levity. Peals of savage laughter insulted her dying agony ; and to add to the horror of the spectacle, the fire did not consist of so much fuel as we consume in dressing a dinner ; no, not this fire that was to consume the living and the dead. I dare not detail the shocking circumstances which terminated this revolting tragedy.

“ Infanticide is practised continually and to a fearful extent among the lower classes of the Hindoos ; every new-born infant who refuses the mother’s milk, is put into a basket, and hung up in a tree for three days, during which time it is consumed by ants, if the birds of prey do not put it to a more merciful death. It is common for those who desire children, to make a vow of devoting the first-born to the goddess Ganges : the victim is brought up till they have a convenient opportunity of performing their pilgrimage and sacrifice to the river ; the child is taken with them, and at the time of bathing is encouraged to walk into deep water till it is carried away by the stream ; should the poor infant hesitate, and with the smile of innocence turn to the bosom that had nourished it, that bosom is petrified by superstition, and the mother’s hand thrusts it into the wave ! Sick persons, whose recovery is despaired of, are laid on the bank of the river, where they die for

want of food, or become the prey of the tiger, whose hideous roar is heard in the distance, or the stream carries them off, or the sharks and crocodiles devour them ; sons have been seen to force their fathers back into the water, when they have endeavoured to regain the shore.

“ But the triumph of the first great murderer is no where more complete than in the immediate vicinity of the dark Pagoda of Juggernaut. It is impossible to approach this region of the shadow of death, without inhaling the abominable effluvia of putrefaction, which, like a pestilence, desolates the neighbouring shores. Innumerable human skeletons, bleaching in the burning air, proclaim the insatiable ravages of this Moloch of the East. So deadly is the superstition with which his myriads of votaries are infected, that on the great festivals, *from which the British Government derives no inconsiderable fund*, every avenue to his temple, for several miles round, is crowded with voluntary victims, all of whom miserably perish—some by fatigue—others by ingenious devices of self-inflicted torture ; their exclusive object is death ; and if they can ‘ trail their charred and blackened bodies’ within the borders of a sanctuary, the walls of which they cannot hope to reach, they are happy.

“ But it is when the terrific pageant comes forth ‘ a moving palace’ of enormous dimensions, supporting the enshrined image of this accursed deity, that superstition may be said to put in the sickle, and to reap the harvest of death. Dragged by the united strength of a thousand

human bodies, priests, victims, Bramins, and Faqueers, its approach is the signal for every horrid species of immolation. Multitudes rush, from time to time, to prostrate themselves under its tremendous wheels, which crush them to atoms in a moment. Others cut themselves with knives, and dye the car, and its line of progress, with streams of blood; while their frantic relatives shout with delight at the heart-revolting spectacle. Mothers cast their infants into the track of the sanguinary procession, and then turn 'to watch the wild and wanton dance of the Almahs, clapping their hands, and keeping time to the silver bells that tinkle round their slight ankles, while their little ones writhe in the agonies of death.'*

"But why should I dwell on such unparalleled horrors—on such a 'frightful picture of blood and cruelty—of the inversion of every principle of nature, and the disruption of every tie of the heart?' In the land where they are exhibited, I learnt to appreciate the religion which breathes only of peace and good-will. For man's neglect, I loved it more. I clung to it as my best inheritance, my dearest solace. It was the only thing that was not strange to me, and that did not shock my feelings. And when I reflected, that it was the glory of the country which gave me birth, that country became infinitely endeared to my heart. How I longed to hear 'the sound of the church-going bell,' to mingle once again in Christian worship, among Christians. Let Nature lavish her gifts as she pleases

on other climes ; let but my native land possess the institutions, and the spirit of Christianity ; and with all its faults, it shall ever be deemed by me ' the loveliest land on the face of the earth.'

" While at Calcutta, I sought an introduction to the Missionaries at Serampore. Their converse was like cold water to a thirsty spirit, and the scene of their labours was the only verdant spot of moral beauty in all that vast peninsula. The Christianity of these men appeared to be of a purer quality than any I had ever witnessed. In such regions, indeed, it is always either improved or annihilated. In the Missionaries, it is not merely prominent. It is every thing. It pervades their whole social economy. It is perfectly easy to identify it with the energy, simplicity, and devotedness of the Apostles. It is the Christianity of Jesus Christ, and shines amidst Atheists and Idolators, a living and irresistible evidence of his divinity. Since the residence of these individuals in India, it is no longer a question with the natives, whether the English possess a Shaster—or, whether they are men, or other creatures like Devourers.* The finest specimens of Humanity, and the brightest ornaments of Religion, are among them, from that very country which has deluged them with impiety and profligacy.

" You will believe me when I assert, that I quitted Calcutta and its neighbourhood with an

* " Oh, Sir," say the converts, in a letter to England, " though we thought that many nations had many kinds of shasters, yet in the country of the English we thought there was no shaster at all. We have even thought that they were not men, but a kind of other creatures, like devourers."

aching heart. The Colonel was ordered to the Mysore country, whither I accompanied him with our infant son ; for soon after our arrival I had become a mother. We were at length stationed at Vellore, and to that mutiny which was most maliciously ascribed to the influence of the Missionaries, but which arose from a totally different cause, have I to attribute my greatest earthly loss, and a train of sorrows, which, but for the sustaining power of the Gospel, would long ere this have consigned me to the grave.

“ On my arrival in England, I learnt with surprise and indignation, that the fanatical zeal (as the divine philanthropy of the Missionaries was contemptuously called) of a few Christians, in a very distant part of British India, and of whom the native troops in the Mysore had probably never heard, had provoked the mutiny at Vellore, and the massacre of so many of my brave countrymen. But it was not zeal of any kind that occasioned this dreadful catastrophe. It was pure absurdity. An insane order had been issued from some mysterious quarter, for altering the turban of the Sepoys into something like the helmet of our light infantry, and from preventing them from wearing on the forehead the distinguishing mark of their cast. As direct an outrage of their religious customs as it would be to prohibit baptism among Christians.* This was indeed a flagrant insult to their faith, an overt-act of intolerance ; yet with it the religion of their persecutors had nothing to do. It was a military folly—a war against turbans and tou-

* Vide Quarterly Review, vol. I. art. 17.

pees, and which, like most of the follies of despotism, which interfere with long established customs and prejudices, led to very disastrous consequences.

“With my beloved husband I spent nearly four years of uninterrupted felicity. Our dear Charles grew up a lovely scion from the parent stem, and his infantile prattle often drew from his father expressions of tenderness, which suffused my eyes with tears of joy. Our affections flowed, and mingled towards this object of mutual endearment. I was too happy.

“The last evening we ever spent together was one of peculiar satisfaction. We conversed of England—happy England; and by a natural transition, our minds were carried upwards to that better country—the Christian’s heaven—the Christian’s home. The Bible lay before us, and I read the last chapter of the Revelations. We then knelt down, and my husband offered up a prayer remarkable for its calm solemnity and fervor. With pathetic earnestness he prayed for me, and our little boy. It was love, conjugal paternal love, heightened and hallowed by a sublime and exquisite devotion. As we rose, I pressed his hand to my heart with a rapture which I never felt before; nor shall I feel it again till I behold his welcoming smile on the shores of Immortality.

“About nine o’clock we retired. At two in the morning we were awakened at the same instant by a loud firing. The Colonel hastened to the window, which was open, and demanded from the crowds of Sepoys that were assembling at the main-guard, the cause of the disturbance. No answer was returned; but the rapid continu-

ance of the firing left us in no doubt of the perils which threatened us. I had not power to articulate, and I dreaded, even by a look, to agitate my husband, whose countenance I perceived was already pale and troubled. With his characteristic coolness and self-command, he wrote a note to be forwarded to Arcott for reinforcements, and gently urging me to seek safety in my chamber, he rushed into the thickest of the danger; hoping by his presence to reclaim the less desperate to a sense of duty, and either to vanquish the others, or to bring them to terms.

"Instinctive terror induced me to close the doors of my apartment, and to seek for my child and attendants the best retreat in my power. I endured two hours of excessive alarm. The thunder of the cannon, and the loud volleys of the musketry, which, with slight intervals, continued till four o'clock, shook my nerves, and I almost died with apprehension. Once, when the firing ceased at the main-guard, I imagined that I heard the foot-step of my husband. I ran to the door, but before I could open it he was gone. New dangers awaited him at the European barracks, where the conflict was renewed, and where the disaffected were making their last desperate struggle. It was too successful, and in a few moments a scene of dreadful carnage and plunder ensued. I had ventured twice from my apartments down to the hall, to ascertain, if possible, the fate of my husband. The last time, as I stood in a situation open to the veranda, a figure approached me. A flash from a distant musket discovered to me a military uniform. I trembled for my safety, and that of

my dear infant. I had courage, however, to ask, who was there? The reply was—‘I am an officer of the main-guard—my brave comrades have all been murdered—the rebels are advancing—fly for your life.’ I rushed back to my chamber, but, before I could reach it, this unfortunate man experienced the doom of his companions. He was cruelly butchered in Colonel Wilmington’s dressing-room. Every moment increased the horror of my situation. Day-light revealed a shocking spectacle. The parade was covered with soldiers of the sixty-ninth regiment lying dead. Sepoys were running in all directions, shouting and yelling with the ferocity of dæmons. Some with savage brutality, were insulting the remains of their hapless victims, while others, intoxicated with success, were ransacking the houses, intent only on rapine and murder. At this moment, I gave up all for lost. My husband’s miniature was in the drawer of my dressing-table. I took it with convulsive agony, and placed it in my bosom. It was an involuntary act of tenderness. I was resolved to retain his dear image even in death. Scarcely had I indulged this pardonable weakness ere a loud noise in the hall adjoining my bed-room, announced the crisis of our fate. I moved softly, and looking through the door, discovered two Sepoys beating our furniture to pieces. At the suggestion of my Agah, we concealed ourselves beneath the bed. Scarcely had we taken this precaution ere the door was forced, and shots poured into the apartment. I have now in my possession a ball which fell close to me, and had nearly proved fatal to my child.

“With the energy of despair, I resolved to make a desperate effort to save our lives. With my Charles in my arms, and the women following me, I presented myself from the back staircase to the Sepoys who were on guard. It was a mother’s appeal, the appeal of holy Nature in its last extremity, and, though made to the hearts of barbarians, it was not in vain. We were permitted to seek refuge in the stables. Here we had not been five minutes when we were visited by a Sepoy, whom I instantly recognized as a man to whom the Colonel had shown many little acts of kindness, and who had manifested an unusual attachment to our darling son. He looked fearfully round, as if apprehensive of being discovered, and whispered to me in hurried accents to escape, pointing at the same time to a fowl-house, which had a bamboo front, as the only asylum. I objected, that there we should be exposed to the view of our enemies. However, I deemed it prudent to follow his suggestion, and he kindly covered our hiding-place with a large mat, and furnished my little Charles with half a loaf of bread, which he greatly needed. Here, famished with thirst, and full of the most dreadful apprehensions, I continued another three hours, every successive moment of which augmented my terror, lest the screaming of my poor boy, who was alarmed at the firing, should reach the ears of our blood-thirsty foes, and allure them to the spot. Through an aperture, I distinctly saw my house plundered, and frequently was chilled with horror when I heard the enraged murderers repeat my name, and threaten me with death!

"But amidst all the horrors, fears for myself were absorbed in anxiety for my husband. I dreaded to hear of his assassination, and I really believe I should have braved death, and searched for him on the parade, had not the situation of my babe withheld me from the rash attempt.

"Exhausted by fatigue and terror, nature was just sinking under the accumulating pressure; when the tremendous roar of cannon at the gates roused my attention, and inspired me with hope. What I conjectured proved to be true; the nineteenth Dragoons, from Arcott, had arrived. My heart beat violently, and I almost fainted with the sudden emotion as I heard the trampling of their horses on the draw-bridge, and the welcoming huzzas of the garrison. Still I was afraid to leave my place of concealment. My name was repeatedly called, but I knew not whether it was by a friendly or a hostile voice; till perceiving several British officers, I imagined that one of them was my husband, and instantly sprang forward to meet him. But, alas! it was a sad illusion. In an agony of suspense, I looked round on all the group, but he was not there. They first told me he was wounded. In mercy they would have deceived me, but my prophetic soul too surely foreboded the heart-appalling fact. I was a widow, and my babe an orphan; so soon passed away my dream of happiness.

Inconsolable at my loss, I could not pray. Even the resources of piety seemed to fail. I felt as if utterly forsaken, and almost questioned the oracular assurance of my dying father. I was a stranger in a strange land. My hopes

were withered, and there were no dews of Heaven to refresh them; no fostering hand gently to raise them upon their bruised stem; no sunshine to restore their fragrance and their beauty. They were crushed, and my poor weak heart was crushed with them. Grief is scarcely grief that is relieved by the luxury of tears. I could not weep. I have no doubt there was impiety in this sorrow. It was a virtual arraignment of the wisdom and mercy of Providence. It was charging God foolishly; and in this consisted its bitterness. If divine faith had not been obscured, and almost annihilated, my calamity would have been great. Yes! with all the supports of religion, I could scarcely have borne it. The infusion of despair made it intolerable. Alas! it was the hour and triumph of weakness. It was nature subduing principle. But God was merciful. I fled from Him into the deep recesses of my woe, but there, where I endeavoured to avoid, I found him. The chastising rod dropt from his hands, and he said, unto me "Live!" In the extremity of my anguish, his compassion visited me.

"All the relief which sympathy and kindness could afford, I experienced from my friends. My sex—my loss—the delicacy of my situation—conspired to insure to me the tenderest offices of humanity, even from strangers. But it was the sacred page, the promise of strength, according to my day—the light of salvation, irradiating the gloomy path of adversity—it was this which supported and cheered my heart. Now, indeed, I learned to appreciate the value of Christian principles, and the incomparable ex-

cellence of the Holy Scriptures. Under this, the heaviest calamity of my life, I experienced their mighty efficacy. When at ease, and enjoying all the comforts of life, I could only speculate on this efficacy, or believe it on the testimony of others. Now, I knew it for myself—speculation became confirmed persuasion, and faith arose to assured certainty. Then, the advantages of my affliction greatly counterbalanced its suffering, and I was taught, in the sad school of experience, the uses of adversity. It came in darkness and in terror, but before the glorious beams of heavenly hope, it melted into a thousand forms of beauty.

CHAPTER VIII.

“O star ! untimely set !
Why should we weep for thee ?
Thy bright and dewy coronet
Is rising o’er the sea.”—*Wilson*.

AFTER a slight pause, Mrs. Wilmington thus continued her story :—

“ But my cup of woe was not yet full. Another stroke was necessary thoroughly to wean me from the world, and to convince me that God *alone* is an all-sufficient portion. While I was making preparations to return to England, my dear Charles sickened. A fever, common to the climate, and generally fatal, discovered its most virulent symptoms, and almost before I was aware of his danger, he expired. Childless, widowed, totally bereaved, I wonder that I sur-

vived the dreadful night of this second visitation. For many hours I was insensible. How willingly would I have died—with what anguish did I awake to a sense of my utter desolation. A dull, constant pang, like a viper, was gnawing at my heart. I seemed to be surrounded with palpable darkness, and the only image that was indelibly impressed upon my mind, was the dead form of my lost angel. Yet was it a form of surpassing loveliness—the brow was serene, a hectic beauty was on the cheeks, and on the mouth sat the sweet smile of innocence and peace. It was only the marble coldness which told me the fatal tidings, that the spirit was fled. For many weeks afterwards, the recollection of the icy chill which touched my lips, when I took my last farewell of all that remained for me to love, made me shudder. I buried my dead out of my sight. But such was my state of perilous weakness, and such a shock was this dismal event to my mind, as well as my heart, that for a considerable time I was harassed with the most unreasonable, and yet the most agonizing fear, which can rend a parent's bosom. Yes! I dared to question the happiness of the dear infant who had smiled upon me in death, and who had only left me 'for the calm of Heaven.' To satisfy myself on this point, I devoted several hours of every day to the study of the Scriptures. This employment was of itself salutary. It occupied and diverted my attention; and though I derived but little comfort from what I read, yet was there a hallowed influence in the blessed volume which insensibly conveyed instruction and vigor to my spirit. I soon found

that my fear was groundless, and that those texts which had greatly strengthened it, when I was incapable of reasoning on the subject, when properly understood, afforded it not the slightest support. My deliberate conclusion, after the most anxious inquiry, was, that all who die in infancy, must be forever happy. It was this conviction which first awakened pleasurable emotion in my heart, after a long season of dreary horror and desolation. Under this delightful persuasion I could not help exclaiming—"In Jesus all the families of the earth are blessed. The benefits of his salvation have enriched all the generations of mankind." Of such is the kingdom of Heaven, Happy, enviable creatures! For a moment they beam before us in the light of existence, and return as rays to the fountain of being, without suffering from the obscuring gloom of earth and sin. Yes! their early departure proves that they are born for a better world than this. They just enter this state of tribulation; they quickly pass through it; their robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb, and they are admitted, for his sake, before the throne."

"Perfectly in unison with these doctrines," said De Clifford, animated by the gentle enthusiasm which had kindled in the bosom of Mrs. Wilmington, "are the following lines, which, strange to say, are the production of Anacreon Moore, whose later works in some measure atone for the profligacy of his earlier Muse.

" Weep not for those whom the veil of the tomb
In life's happy morning hath hid from your eyes,
Ere Sin threw a blight o'er the spirits young bloom,
Or Earth had profaned what was meant for the skies.

**"Weep not for them—ere their Spring-time they flew
To that land where the wings of the soul are unfurl'd;
And now, like a star, beyond Evening's cold dew,
Look radiantly down on the tears of this world."**

Mr. Evelyn pursued the subject, and by suspending the narrative of Mrs. Wilmington, enabled her to recruit her almost exhausted spirits. "There is something," he observed, "peculiarly consoling to my heart, when I contemplate the horrible ravages of sin, to reflect, that at least two-thirds of all the generations of mankind, the proportion of those who die in infancy, are the happy fruits of redeeming mercy. The objections usually urged against this cheering doctrine, have always appeared to me as contrary to Scripture as they are repugnant to Humanity.

"When it is argued, that because infants are born in sin, and conceived in iniquity, they are therefore exposed to all the penal consequences of actual offence, I deny the conclusion. The relation of infants to Divine Justice is of a very different nature from that of actual transgressors. Personal, and not *federal*, responsibility, is the only scriptural ground of his procedure, when the Almighty is pleased to inflict punishment. I say, punishment, in contra-distinction from suffering, for it frequently happens, that in the latter, there is nothing vindictive, while the former necessarily implies righteous displeasure. The solemnities of the last Judgment illustrate and confirm this observation.

"The progenitor of our race is not summoned to the awful tribunal of Heaven, to receive the sentence of condemnation, as the federal

head of his posterity ; but all the generations of mankind are called, in their individual and personal capacity, to answer for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil ; and the severest part of the punishment, which they are doomed to suffer, who fall under condemnation, is termed, '*the worm that dieth not,*'—the gnawing anguish of remorse—bitter and excruciating regrets, on account of conscious guilt, a torment which infants cannot endure. For we may ask, what is their *moral* and *penal* condition ? Only one act of disobedience is imputed to them in virtue of the federal relation in which they stand to Adam ; and the depravity, which they receive from him, is rather of a negative than of a positive kind. And with regard to their penal condition, as arising out of this negative corruption of the heart, there is a manifest difference between original and actual guilt—a difference analogous to that between personal and imputed righteousness, consequently, we become guilty through our connexion with Adam, in the same manner as we are made righteous through the righteousness of Jesus Christ : as, therefore, we cannot properly be said to merit eternal life by his obedience, so neither can we, before actual sin, be said, in a strict sense, to deserve eternal death.

“ In this view of the subject, infants appear to me, to stand in a peculiar relation to the benefits of salvation by a Mediator ; a relation precisely similar to that in which they stand, to the horrors of the curse, as the posterity of Adam ; and as in Adam they all died, we may reasonably conclude, so in Christ they are all made

alive. His obedience is imputed to them for righteousness, and that holy influence which alone can make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, is doubtless infused into them as they take their departure to the world of bliss. Oh ! what a glory does this shed on the atonement and righteousness of our Redeemer ! How honorable is it to the grace and virtue of the Holy Spirit !”

“ But,” inquired Louisa, “ do not the objectors to this truly rational and Christian doctrine, urge the relation of the great majority of infants to wicked and profligate parents, as materially affecting their eternal destiny ?”

“ They do,” rejoined Mr. Evelyn ; “ they very absurdly contend, that only the children of believing parents are the heirs of promise ; and that God exercises an awful sovereignty in visiting the sins of unholy parents upon their hapless offspring. But it is evident, that whatever is meant by the children of pious parents, being heirs of the promise, it is not designed to affect their final state. For many of the descendants of the most virtuous individuals exhibit, in their characters, a degeneracy, which strikingly proves, that they do not inherit the piety of their parents, and, therefore, that they cannot participate in their Heaven. Religion is not to be considered as a heir-loom. Many have deprived themselves of it, whose families once possessed it, and on many others, it has been conferred, whose progenitors were either Atheists or Idolaters. The idea, that Divine Sovereignty is exercised in the eternal destruction of children, to the third and fourth generation, on

account of the delinquency of their parents, is one of the most horrible that ever darkened the gloomy regions of intolerance and bigotry. Sovereign Reprobation! This notion is not from above, but from beneath. It is an accursed invention of the Father of Lies. In the procedure of the Supreme Ruler, there is no reprobation but justice, no punishment inflicted where there has been no transgression. I have no sympathy with those dark and cruel religionists, who cannot behold the sovereignty of God with complacency, unless it assume the terrific character of those barbarous idolaters, who sacrificed their infant children to appease the rage of dæmons.

“Whatever may be intended in the awful threatening of God, that he will visit the offenses of the parents upon the children, we are perfectly sure, that it cannot refer to their destiny in a future world. Indeed, the Divine Being has wiped off this foul reproach on his character in language plain and palpable. When the Jews abused this maxim, to a reflection on the justice and goodness of Jehovah, and said, ‘the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge,’ the Almighty reproves the injurious calumny; ‘No,’ says he, ‘it shall no more be thus said: Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. Every one shall die for his own iniquity.’

“I know it has been said, that the Divine Governor has acted upon the former principle

in the cases of the antediluvian world, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and of the rebellious Jews. Infants, it is true, perished in these calamities. But what can be inferred from this? In this world, and as it regards temporal judgments, the same thing happens alike to all. For a season, and in reference to the present economy *only*, the innocent suffer with the guilty; but who will dare to confound their eternal destinies? Who will be hardy enough to maintain, that all the infants that have died by public calamities, have perished? To give something like support to this appalling notion, it has been affirmed, that both the Apostles, Peter and Jude, take for granted, that the antediluvians, and the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, are shut up in prison, and doomed to eternal fire. But it is fortunate for my view of this subject, that neither of the passages referred to include infants. 'By which also,' says Peter, 'he, that is, Christ, went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' Now, what does this mean? That Christ went down to Hell, and preached personally to its inhabitants? Certainly not. The preacher here intended was, the *spirit* of Christ in the ministry of Noah. The audience, those unhappy beings who *afterwards* were incarcerated in Tophet, and who are called 'the Spirits in Prison;' and that they were not infants, is evident, for they are represented as having been *disobedient* to the preaching addressed to them. The same observation applies to the text in Jude. Those whom the Apostle declares to be under the vengeance of eternal fire, are only those who "gave

themselves over to the commission of crimes," of which infants are incapable.

"There is, therefore, no scriptural warrant to justify any distinction being made between the destinies of infants from the characters of their parents."

"In the hours of bitter anguish, to which I have alluded," said Mrs. Wilmington, "I was harassed by the distressing fear lest infants should not be included in the covenant of mercy."

"During the nervous depression of your spirits, I am not surprised," rejoined Mr. Evelyn, "that this apprehension, utterly unfounded as it is, should have increased the gloom of your desolation. Why should not infants be comprehended in the grant of salvation, and in the provisions of that covenant, which is the highest display of divine goodness to the intelligent universe? Why should infants perish? Why should they be condemned, when their condemnation must proceed on a principle totally different from that of actual, obstinate, and persevering transgressors, while it would involve them in the same misery?"

"The covenant of mercy, whatever it may embrace, is not to be made responsible for the destruction of any of the guilty children of men. That obstinate rebels go down to Hell, is not through want of efficacy in Christ's atonement—is not owing to any impotency of Divine Grace—is not for want of compassion in God;—least of all, can it be from any pleasure the Deity can receive from the miseries of his creatures. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have

no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' On what ground, different from that of impenitent sinners, I ask, are infants to be excluded from the covenant of mercy? If they are not comprehended in it, in what language, consistent with goodness, and even with justice, will their eternal condemnation be pronounced? On what principle of the Divine Government, which allows of the operation of a system of Grace, will their exclusion proceed? But I maintain, that the language of our heavenly Father, the discourses of our gracious Redeemer, and his personal kindness to the infants of our race, are strong, nay, irresistible presumptions, that they are included in the covenant of mercy.

"In one part of Scripture, it is said, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, he will ordain strength.' In another, that 'children are the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his delight.' In the case of Nineveh, he pleads with Jonah, as an argument why he should spare that wicked city, that there were so many in it 'who knew not their right hand from their left.' Can we infer from such sentences as these, (and others of similar import abound in the Old Testament,) that the Being who utters them, can have decreed infants, the avowed objects of his tender compassion, to the darkness and horror of the bottomless pit? The conclusion would be impious. But let us hear the faithful and true witness, who is, 'in the bosom of the Father, and hath revealed him.' He assures us, 'that the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost;' and he beautifully illustrates this solicitude of divine

benevolence by a parable :—‘ How think ye ? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth unto the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray ? and if so be, that he find it, verily, I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.’ Now, the whole force of this exquisite representation is made to bear upon the case of infants. It is not the will of the Shepherd, that his one sheep in the wilderness should perish. He therefore seeks until he finds it. He restores it to his fold, and is happy, rejoicing more in the recovery of this one, than in all his other possessions. ‘ *Even so,*’ adds the compassionate Redeemer, ‘ it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these *little ones* should perish.’ On another occasion, in spite of the prejudices of his enemies, and the jealousies of his disciples, he encouraged parents, and such as had the care of infants, to bring them to him, that he might *bless* them. Surely we must for ever banish from our minds the injurious thought of his saying, at the last day, ‘ Depart !’ to those whom, in the days of his humanity, he embraced in his arms, and in whose behalf, he uttered the gentle reproof—‘ Suffer *little* children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.’

“ As to the present intellectual and moral incapacity of infants, and their not being able to perform acts either of faith or repentance, which in adults are indispensable to salvation, this forms, in my view, no disqualification for their possession of the heavenly inheritance.

Indeed, were such a conclusion to be derived from such premises, it would place all the infants, that ever lived and died, under the ban of annihilation, or of something worse, and would be a horrible perversion of the charter of mercy to mankind. Though infants are not *now* capable of rational acts, they have the incipient capacity, and can enjoy happiness, or feel misery. Introduced into a world of vision and felicity, where their faculties will be matured, why should they not participate in all the glories of salvation, and pour their sublime Hosannahs to the Son of David, in strains as warm, and in devotion as exalted, as the loftiest Seraphim."

Relieved by a discussion that had revived and strengthened principles which had sustained her in her deepest sorrow, Mrs. Wilmington renewed her tale of sad vicissitude. Having deposited the remains of all that was dear to her, in a foreign clime, she lingered on the melancholy spot till the imperious voice of necessity forced her away. During her long voyage to her native country she became once more a mother. The lovely Julia was born, and she was restored to comparative happiness. When she arrived at this part of her narrative, the sympathy of her audience was powerfully excited. The venerable Pastor remembered the holy Font—the hours of prattling infancy, and the maturing loveliness and piety of the dear departed; the heart of De Clifford was torn by a thousand emotions; but with self-reproach he was tortured almost to madness. Louisa, deeply interested for the living, wept a tribute of sincere affection to the memory of her who was no

more ; while, in tones which indicated solemn and devout feeling, which proved, that while the heart of nature bled, the soul of religion was not to be subdued, Mrs. Wilmington thus concluded :

“ I have been visited with a series of what are usually denominated misfortunes. I have had sorrow upon sorrow, and now my last light is quenched, my last leaf is withered. Earth is become to me little more than a scene of darkness and desolation. But the prophetic assurance of my expiring father, to which I have so often adverted, is at this moment fulfilled. His God does not forsake me. It is the prerogative of the Christian to feel, that his treasure is in Heaven ; that it may be increased, but cannot be impaired. What I most valued here, what almost claimed rivalship with Deity in my heart, and which was so far a snare to my principles, and an enemy to my peace, has been graciously removed to augment the riches of Eternity ; to swell my sum of enjoyment in regions, where our love will be proportioned to the intrinsic excellence of its objects, and where those objects, instead of retarding our progress, will bear us on their wings in our approximation to the Infinite Fountain of Light and Joy.

“ Had I never known affliction, had my path been cheered with all the warm and summer light of earthly joy—how poor would have been my felicity, and how soon would it have sunk below the narrow horizon of the tomb ! Even when life glows upon us with all its radiance, we cannot be happy

"Without those hopes, that, like refreshing gales,
At ev'ning from the sea, come o'er the soul,
Breath'd from the ocean of Eternity."

"And I am sure I may complete the exquisite lines; adding, at the same time, my testimony to their moral truth and beauty.

"And oh! without them who could bear the storms -
That fall in roaring blackness o'er the waters
Of agitated life? Then hopes arise
All round our sinking souls, like those fair birds,
O'er whose soft plumes the tempest hath no pow'r,
Waving their snow-white wings amid the darkness,
And wiling us with gentle motion, on
To some calm island! on whose silv'ry strand,
Dropping at once, they fold their silent pinions,
And, as we touch the shores of Paradise,
In love and beauty walk around our feet."

"While life is continued, it has its duties. When one class of obligation ceases, another succeeds. If we have no immediate domestic circle in which to move and shine, we must create to ourselves a sphere, and draw around us those whom we can love, and serve, and render happy. Edward! you are restored; the prodigal is returned, and is welcome home. Louisa! henceforth you are my daughter; in you my sainted Julia lives again. And you, my venerable father, and much respected friend—your guidance, your prayers, your near approach to Heaven, and happy fitness for it, shall animate, support, and bless me. Bereaved as I am, and alone in this sad world, I have yet greater cause for gratitude than regret. I feel, that it is not in the power of calamity, of all the ills that life is heir to, and I have endured the

worst, to rob the Christian of his HAPPINESS ! The possessions and enjoyments of earth, are too apt to rise, like a tall tangled forest, between his faith and its object ; when these are removed, it is as if a vista were opened to the fair distant prospect of immortality. I have little now to intercept my vision of the glorious inheritance that awaits the Christian traveller when his pilgrimage is over. I have none to detain me in my progress ; and those, had they lived, whose affectionate regrets, as they surrounded my bed of death, might have made me linger and long to remain, will now be attendant spirits from a world of bliss, to allure me from earth, and to urge my departure. Instead of receiving from my family their sad farewell, I shall be greeted with their congratulations. We shall not separate, but meet, and meet to part no more. For

“ In that world to which my hopes look on,
Time enters not, nor mutability—
Beauty and goodness are unfading there ;
Whatever there is given us to enjoy,
That we enjoy for ever, still the same.”

“ While it is my privilege to indulge these hopes, I yet feel a chastened satisfaction in the objects which remain with me. I have still something to love ; and that felicity on earth, which has been wisely and mercifully denied to me, I may, perhaps, be permitted to promote and to behold in others.”

When Mrs. Wilmington uttered the last sentence, she gently pressed the hand of Louisa, and cast a look of tenderness on De Clifford. A

solemn pensive silence ensued, which was at length broken by Mr. Evelyn, who, after a few impressive observations, naturally suggested by what they had heard, led his companions to "the throne of the heavenly Grace," where they mutually poured forth the full soul of devotion.

CHAPTER IX.

"Servir Dieu, ce n'est point passer sa vie à genoux dans un Oratoire, je le sais bien; c'est remplir sur la terre les devoirs qu'il nous impose; c'est faire, en vue de lui plaire tout ce qui convient à l'état où il nous a mis :

" ———— Il cor gradisce;
E serve a lui chi'l suo douer compisce."

J. J. Rousseau.

LOUISA, having spent the most considerable portion of the year, in scenes of deep seclusion, which, together with the few living beings with whom she conversed, had operated an entire change in her principles and character, as the winter approached, was summoned by her father, to mingle in the world, and to appear once more in the circles from which she would willingly have retired for ever. Her heart had been estranged from them before her visit to the country; and there, attracted by objects sublime, rational, and immortal, she could not endure the thought of returning to them again. Experience had taught her, that they were vain, and she was now convinced, that they were

equally repugnant to the spirit and influence of true religion.

The question which greatly agitated her feelings in the prospect of leaving Beaulieu for the gaieties of fashionable life, was, whether she ought not at once firmly, and yet affectionately, to represent to Sir George, the alteration of her views and sentiments, and her determination to abandon all intercourse with the world, in which she had formerly lived. In the fervour of youthful and recently acquired piety, she had promptly resolved to make a communication to this effect to her father: but, from taking a step so very questionable, as it related to filial and other social duties, which arose out of the station assigned to her by the wisdom of Providence, she was deterred by the judicious advice of Mrs. Wilmington.

Fervid feelings, when enlisted on the side of Religion, are too apt to carry us into the regions of Quietism, and, under their influence, many, for a season at least, are induced to dissolve the natural and social relations of life; to go, in fact, out of the world, and literally to forsake father and mother; all the endearments of nature, and all the claims of society—for the sake of Christ. They please themselves with some model of ideal excellence, and are absorbed in lofty contemplations of a perfection unattainable by man, and unsuited to his present condition.

Under the same influence, others, less imaginative and enthusiastic, become gregarious, they herd together, and confine the whole range of social obligation to their own sect; designating the rest of mankind, and even all Christians, who

do not entertain precisely the opinions which they embrace—Wolves and Destroyers.

The first of these classes mistake the nature of man, and the nature of religion, and the second calumniate both. Yet, the moment we become religious, we are in danger of falling into one or other of these errors. These are the great temptations which assail us in the commencement of our piety; at a subsequent period of our religious profession, we are exposed to perils of an opposite kind.

Human nature is not exalted, is not improved, by any system which breaks the social link, and places the individual in a distant sphere, beyond the attraction of his fellow-beings. What it thus gains in intellectual elevation, it loses in moral grandeur; and though it cannot be reached by earthly temptations, it is easily subdued by “spiritual wickednesses in high places.”

If the future state has its perfection and felicity, the present has its duties and its trials, and the one must be performed and endured, or the other cannot be attained and enjoyed. Contemplation is not a virtue in itself—it may be rendered a powerful incentive to virtue; but when it is indulged as a *substitute* for actual duty, it becomes vicious. Whatever aims to ennoble and to purify us, by raising us above the sphere of our usefulness, altogether fails of its object. Man obeys the law of his Being, when he lives *with* men, and *for* them.

The virtue of an angel associates him with angels, and makes him a ministering spirit to the heirs of salvation. The being that voluntarily separates himself from his kind, is so far dena-

turalized. He is either the slave of timidity or of pride. One is a deplorable weakness, the other a detestable vice, and both are at an infinite distance from the true dignity of a rational nature.

Christianity is grievously misunderstood, when it is represented as inimical to social existence and social enjoyment. It certainly unveils the glory of the future, to shed its light upon the present; and those who imbibe its spirit, look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal. Yet, are they not relieved from domestic and civil obligation. In short, man, under the Christian dispensation, is not a new structure, erected on the ruin of the former; he may rather be compared to an ancient fabric, restored when it had fallen into decay, and beautified afresh by the hand of its original founder. Since Christianity has made its appearance in the world, he has continued the same kind of being he was before, fills the same scale in the order of existence, and is distinguished by the same propensities and powers. Jesus Christ never intended that his followers, on becoming Christians, should forget they were men, or consider themselves as idle or uninterested spectators on the great theatre of life. No individual, therefore, can plead, when he chooses, the life of a mystic, and retires from the world to the heights of contemplation, or the seclusion of a monastery, that he is obeying the dictates, or imbibing the spirit of the Christian religion. And, least of all, can this plea be urged by those who consider a profession of the

same faith, the only bond of social union; and the want of this profession, even in their dearest relatives, as a sufficient reason for dissolving the ties of consanguinity; and the claims of natural duty. The laws of Nature are not abrogated by the precepts of the Gospel. Christianity regulates, purifies, and exalts our affections; but it does not, cannot annihilate them.

It is true, that Christian fellowship is a high and glorious privilege, and that similarity of views and feelings on the subject of religion, will naturally create attachment, and induce us to prefer, as our chosen companions, those who thus resemble us in that which is confessedly the most important pursuit of our being. It is also equally true, that the Divine Founder of Christianity has declared, with an awful emphasis of meaning, it is impossible not to feel, and which some, indeed, have understood too literally:—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But, when the communion of Saints withdraws men from every other communion, and when passages like the present are interpreted so as to sanction such withdrawment, the character of the Gospel is subverted by the very zeal which would maintain it. In order to understand the Christian doctrine of this and similar texts of Scripture, it is necessary to consider, what is implied in being a disciple of Christ, and the difficulties with which, in the time of our Lord, all who were anxious to attain this character, had to contend, and which, to a certain extent, have existed in their full force up to the present moment.

A disciple of Christ must embrace the doctrines he taught, especially those which are *peculiar* to his religion; though mysterious, he must believe them; though repugnant to his pride and prejudice, he must bow to their influence. He must also obey the precepts of his Master. In matters of faith and practice, he must renounce every other authority, and pay the utmost deference to what Christ has enjoined. He must unite himself distinctly and avowedly with his followers, however calumniated and despised, and wear every other badge by which Christians are to be known and distinguished as a peculiar people; but, most especially, must he imbibe the spirit of his great teacher—a spirit of self-renunciation—of lowly meekness—of absolute devotement to the entire will of God—a spirit altogether unworldly and heavenly. This is Christian discipleship. It comprehends this—all this—nothing less than this.

Now, if a view be taken of the formidable obstacles which, in the days of Christ's humanity, surrounded every individual disposed to attain this character, it will be at once perceived, how necessary it was that he should be addressed in language, which demanded from him a voluntary sacrifice of his most endeared connexions, and even of his life.

The Gospel had then not only to contend with the depravity of the human heart, and with the common principles, maxims, and spirit of the world, which is at all times its determined adversary; with honours, which Paul might have attained, and which Agrippa dared not re-

nounce; with pleasures which none can love without alienating their affections from God; and with covetousness, which Felix could not forego, and the young man, who had large possessions, could not relinquish;—but with all this mighty phalanx, supported by Judaism, on the one hand, with all its strict, proud, and unyielding exclusiveness; and by Paganism, on the other, under all its forms of fascination and of power; and these again embodied and arrayed in the persons of beloved relatives, held together by the ties of consanguinity, and armed with all the fearful energy of reciprocal endearments:—it was, in these circumstances, that Jesus Christ declared, “Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, and hateth not father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

But whoever imagined, that these strong assertions are to be interpreted literally? We are not to suppose, because we are Christians, that we are under any circumstances to forget what is due to those social connexions which only death can dissolve. Christ, indeed, claims our hearts. Within them he must reign without a rival; but, that very love, which he requires, is a mighty stimulus to the performance of those natural duties, which before, were plain and easy, but which, our relation to him, may have rendered complicated and difficult. One of the finest passages in Millman’s beautiful poem, the *Fall of Jerusalem*, adjusts the apparently interfering claims of Nature and Christianity. The lovely proselyte, Miriam, entreated by

her Christian lover, to renounce for ever the paternal roof, and her cruel father, the detestable Simon, breathes the very spirit of her new religion in the following exquisite expostulation :—

“ Oh ! cease ; I pray thee, cease.
 Javan ! I know, that all men hate my father ;
 Javan ! I fear, that all should hate my father ;
 And therefore, Javan, must his daughter's love,
 Make up to his forlorn and desolate heart,
 The forfeited affection of his kind.
 Is't not so written in our law ? And *He*,
 We worship, came not to destroy the law.
 Then let men rain their curses, let the storms
 Of human hate, beat on his rugged trunk ;
 I will cling to Him—starve, die, bear the scoffs
 Of men upon my scattered bones with Him.”

Still the words of our Saviour have a very important meaning ; though not to be understood literally, they are yet to be considered as demanding a renunciation of every thing incompatible with entire devotedness to Him. And, so far as the honours, possessions, and relations of the present life, are obstacles to our becoming true Christians, they are to be relinquished and hated. We must “forsake all,”—that is, all *comparatively* in respect of affection ; and *absolutely*, whenever it stands in competition with the paramount duty we owe to Religion. But we are not to go out of the world, nor voluntarily to abandon our connexions in society. Our light is to *shine before men*. The piety that is too delicate to bear the gaze of the world, or too sensitive to endure its touch, it is to be feared, is spurious in its nature. It wants the two grand distinguishing principles of Christian de-

votion—*utility* and *diffusion*; the principles which impel us to do good to others, and to propagate our faith.

It is admitted, that to live in the world, and especially in the higher and fashionable circles, is fraught with temptations; but, if society has its snares, solitude is not without its dangers; and, whatever may be the evils incident to the former, it affords us constant opportunities to glorify God; while the latter employs all our solicitude upon ourselves.

The world is not desirable for its own sake. The Christian does not consider it as the elysium of his joys; but as the field of his conflicts. The recluse flies like a coward from the scene of action; the Christian, who adds to his faith, virtue, fears not to meet the embattled host, and defies a world in arms. It is true, he may be often wounded, sometimes repulsed, and occasionally betrayed—but he never goes over to the enemy. Taught, by early failures and dearly purchased experience, he may conduct his hostility with a subtle wariness, which some of his honest, but less refined and enlightened comrades, may be perplexed to understand, and which may excite their suspicion, if not provoke their censure; but with his *opponents*, it is never a question, to what cause he is attached, or under whose banner he fights. He that undermines the walls of a city, effects its capture more surely than he who would take it by storm. Light infantry and heavy artillery may render most important services in a general warfare; but in the case of a siege, sappers and miners are of more value than all the

troops than can be brought into the field. It is, likewise, better to persuade a garrison to lay down their arms, than to infuriate their enmity, and to compel them to die sword in hand. Thus, those Christians best promote the cause of true religion, who, while they renounce the world in spirit, do not abandon their station, but still live in society for the purpose of counteracting its vices by conciliating its prejudices.

Sinful compliances are totally out of the question. What is condemned by the sobriety and purity of the Gospel, must be inconsistent with the Christian profession. But, while a certain class of religionists are pleading for every part of the world by turns, and altogether neutralizing the effect of every self-denying precept of the New Testament, it is amusing to hear others, whose means of information are extremely limited, and who move in a sphere most unfriendly to intellectual expansion, denounce and proscribe, till they alone, in the range of their thought, the character of their dress, the style of their living, and the dismal elongation of their faces, are to be considered as the standard of all Christian excellence. And, woe! woe! to the luckless wight, whose education has given him refined ideas, and the manners of a gentleman, whose establishment is liberal, and above all, whose countenance wears the smile of gay good humour. With these Goths and Vandals, literature is an offence; music, unless it be *sacred*, a vile abomination; and a chess-board, the very horror of horrors. Should any of these meek, gracious, and patent personages, by any chance read the part of Lou-

isa's history, which is now to be told, they will turn pale with dismay, and indulge for a series of years, perhaps, their cardinal virtues of lying and slandering; quoting her worldly conformity, in one solitary instance, involving no direct violation of any law, human or divine, as an argument against the consistency of her whole future life, and as a reason why she ought not only to be censured for that single act, but calumniated for ever as irreligious by all good Christians—that is, by all who are as illiberal and malignant as themselves.

CHAPTER X.

“ ———— The hour

When, in its second best nativity,

• My soul was born again through grace, this heart
Died to the world.”—*Soulkey*.

As Sir George Delaval, from the natural kindness of his disposition, and his general indifference about Religion, was not at all likely to impose upon his daughter any thing she might deem injurious to her piety, her compliance with his request, to spend the winter with him in London, was, in Mrs. Wilmington's opinion, the dictate both of prudence and Christianity. The “hatred” required of converts towards their Jewish and Pagan relatives, who might interpose their authority to prevent their openly professing the Gospel, was justly considered by this lady, as extending no farther than the aversion with which a Martyr may be said to regard

his own life, when he is ready to sacrifice it to the call of duty ; and, as having no reference whatever to the case of her interesting friend, whose father, though a man of the world, was entitled to her love and obedience in whatever did not interfere with her obligations to her Saviour.

That Louisa should leave the quiet, rational, devout, and happy circle of Beaulieu, with regret, and that she should feel anxiety, and something like apprehensive dread, in looking forward to the far different scenes which awaited her, was perfectly natural. The only anticipation, which afforded her pleasure, was her once more embracing Emily ; and this, in some degree, reconciled her to her departure.

The morning after her arrival in town, the two friends met. But, how changed were both. Louisa, was no longer melancholy—Emily, was no longer gay. On the brow of the one, sat the serene loveliness of tranquil, happy piety ; the countenance of the other, was worn with care, and the smile that once told of the joyousness which played around her heart, was now forced and languid, and spoke only of ill-suppressed sorrow. Louisa was really shocked at the transformation which a few months had effected, and the tear of sympathy glistened in her eye as she pressed the trembling Emily to her bosom. But her presence at length imparted to her friend something of her wonted animation, and, before they separated, she so perfectly looked her former self, and talked so much in her usual strain, that Louisa was half persuaded, she was as gay, as thoughtless, and as happy as ever. “I

am glad to see you," she exclaimed, "my dearest Louisa; but you must now dismiss your formal airs, and take the Graces once more into favour. Believe me, you must not play the Saint here, or we shall be quizzed to death. We are all going to the play to-night; and as the place is not holy ground, you must for once put off your Methodist shoes. Bless me, how grave you look!—Is there any harm in going to a play?"

"That is precisely the question," replied Louisa, "I was beginning to revolve in my mind—I am sure there is a great deal of harm in plays, and in a theatre; but whether, going to a play, will be any otherwise injurious to me, than as it is a waste of time, I am not at present quite competent to determine. I have no wish to enter a theatre again—it is more a matter of indifference than aversion, and I had infinitely rather spend the evening with you at home."

At the sound of home, Emily sighed; but, recovering her gaiety, she said, laughing, "I am never at home of an evening, but to 'my dear five hundred friends.' We shall be more alone and at home at the play than any where—you *must* go with us. The tragedy is a very fine one, and it is unquestionably moral, for it is the production of a Clergyman."

As Louisa had never at any period of her life been seized with the theatrical mania, and as she had been accustomed to visit the theatre chiefly as a lounge, where fashionable people meet to exhibit themselves before they glide away to midnight routs and parties—its amusements had left no trace of their pernicious cha-

racter upon her mind. She had gone, and returned, a hundred times without any other impression than that she had listened to fine sentiments, and witnessed fine acting; but of the moral qualities of the performances, she knew nothing. She was, therefore, on the present occasion, in no danger either of being charmed by the novelty, or captivated by the sentimental fascinations of a theatre. It was not the amusement, but the company of Emily she wished to enjoy; and this alone induced her to comply with her request.

The evening arrived; but as the carriage drove off to the point of attraction, a scene of appalling grandeur occurred, which, for a considerable time retarded its progress. A storm of preternatural sublimity, whose dark terror had for several hours "hurtled distantly," now burst with tremendous fury upon the metropolis: the lightning one moment glared like sheeted fire in the sky, and the next streamed its liquid blue along the ground; loud peals of thunder seemed to proclaim the day of doom, while torrents of impetuous rain appeared to threaten a second deluge. The living world crouched, as in the presence of its incensed Creator; the streets were wholly deserted, except by a solitary carriage, that now and then passed with fearful rapidity to its place of destination. But for the awe, bordering on dread, which absorbed her powers of reflection, Louisa would have felt the delight of one of the finest and most magnificent contrasts that, perhaps, was ever exhibited in the natural heavens. A contrast between the conflict, confusion, and ter

ror of the tempest that now raged over her head, and the tranquil, exquisite, and soothing beauty of the preceding evening. None that witnessed the two, can ever forget them. Never was there a storm of more alarming portent, and never was there a scene more bewitchingly attractive. An arch of the Heavens was like sapphires, and emeralds, and rubies, piled one on another, each softened into each, and diffusing over all a bright cerulean blue. Immediately below, a topaz sea glowed in all the calm repose of evening—transparent and clear as ocean, when the Sun is setting in golden lustre on its bosom. All this hung a gorgeous pageant in the sky, till the sable curtain of night gradually wrapt it in impenetrable darkness. It was as if celestial spirits had chosen to visit earth, arrayed in every visible glory which Heaven could bestow, and reluctantly shaded them at their departure from the admiring gaze of mortals. Such was the precursor of that war of elements which now so frightfully agitated the whole frame of Nature, and which seemed to proclaim the rebel triumph of far different agents. It required no very lively fancy to imagine the “Strife of Fiends” on “the battling clouds,” and the “glare of Hell,” in the “sulphureous lightnings.” But Louisa acknowledged with delight and awe, a present Deity in both. With a reverential impression of the greatness of Him, whose mighty voice speaks in the thunder, who “rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm,” she entered the theatre just at the moment when the mimic thunder and lightning of the first scene in “*Bertram*,” broke the charm of her feelings. With

the very glories of the infinite Majesty flashing before her eyes, her heart almost died within her, at this impious ~~aping~~ ^{asp}ing of the Divinity, at this presumptuous attempt to personate the Almighty, in what appeared to her the grand prerogative of his being. It seemed to her a mockery and an insult, offered to the God of Nature, at the awful moment when he was proclaiming his omnipotence to a trembling world. This alone would have been sufficient to deprive her of all gratification from the evening's amusements. But the sudden transition she had experienced from the Sanctuary, the haunts and the associates of piety—to the Temple, the scenes, and the company of the world, forced upon her a conviction of the amazing distance between the two. She seemed to have crossed a great gulf, and, by one bound, to have passed from Heaven to Earth. Her memory recurred to the last time she had visited a theatre, and she felt, that she was now a totally different being from her former self. Then, although there was little to gratify, there was nothing to offend—she sighed for something better; but was contented, at least not disgusted. But now, the *tout ensemble*, and every part of the spectacle around her, revolted her feelings, and inflicted a pang upon her heart. The audience, composed as it was of immortal beings, totally unmindful of this high distinction of their nature, and devoting their noblest faculties to folly and vice, living without thought, without hope, and without God, inventing expedients to procure a complete oblivion of the future, to abuse reason, and lull conscience, in the fatal sleep of moral death, inspired her with the deepest sorrow.

The Stage itself excited in her bosom mingled sensations of grief and indignation, and she was astonished that she could ever have endured the horrible principles and actions which it inculcated and applauded. Debauchees and profligates by profession, appearing in the habit and character of Ministers of Religion, profaning the awful name of God, and uttering from their unhallowed lips the sublime mysteries of Christianity, shocked her even more than open ribaldry and blasphemy. She felt, that Religion and the Priesthood were too sacred to be exhibited for mere amusement, and especially for the despicable purpose of giving effect to scenic representations, which, for the most part, are at war with piety, and subversive of its influence. In the present instance, she was confounded that a Clergyman of a Protestant Church, should so far degrade himself as to prepare a tragedy for actual exhibition, which was not only inconsistent with the spirit and precepts of the Gospel, but the evident intention of which was to emblazon infernal energy, and to excite powerful sympathy in favour of a character that deserves nothing but unqualified detestation,—a sublime monster of preternatural wickedness, the dark creation of a mind of purer mould, that has condescended to imitate the models of that infidel poet, whose name and writings are a reproach to our age and nation.*

* Should the admirers of the Author of *Don Juan*, think the above censure too strong, let the earlier Muse of his Lordship instruct them how to feel and to speak of their execrable idol. In the only production of Byron, which contains a

With every act, and every scene, the disgust of Louisa increased. The horrid grossness of depravity, that is implied as perpetrated during the performance, which outrages all decency, and is almost without a precedent, even in Germanic immorality, offended her delicacy, and made her shrink ashamed from the gaze of every eye. She was amazed, that the actress, who personated the guilty Imogene, could dare to appear again before the audience ; and, in the last scene, the prostitution of Religion, the hideous display of hardened impiety and remorseless wickedness, invested with attributes which neutralize all the evil, and awaken pity, and even admiration, towards crime and infamy, were too much for her patience, and she resolved instantly to quit the theatre. Complaining of indisposition, she retired with Emily. Dormer, who had been lounging in the lobby and the saloon, sauntered in, just in time, to hand them from their box to the carriage.

Thus did the theatre work its own ruin in a mind that had outgrown its follies ; and thus did an experiment, which in many other cases might

line friendly to virtue, we have the following censure of Anacreon Moore:—

“ ’Tis LITTLE ! Young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral in his lay !
Griev’d to condemn, the Muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of Lust !
Pure is the flame which o’er her altar burns,
From grosser incense with disgust she turns.
Yet, kind to youth, this expiation o’er,
She bids thee mend thy line, and sin no more.

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.

have been fraught, with danger, produce an effect the most salutary. Perhaps, if some violent zealot, with more acrimony than argument, had set about convincing Louisa, that it was a dreadful sin to go to a theatre, and that one visit would stamp her with the mark of reprobation for ever, she might have remained unpersuaded, and determined to defend the lawfulness of what had not been proved to her as forbidden by the Christian Legislator. But her own observation, united with the delicate and pure sensibilities of heartfelt Religion, completely vanquished this allurements of the world.

On retiring to her chamber, she pondered deeply the scenes she had witnessed, and the emotions which, during their exhibition, had agitated her bosom. She contrasted them with the glorious realities and tranquil pleasures of Religion; she found, that it was impossible to reconcile them, that the same heart could not welcome them both; that the one must be sacrificed for the other—and she was happy in discovering the progress which genuine piety had made in forming her character. In this view, she did not regret that she had tried her principles by the test of the world, in one of its most characteristic amusements. She was, however, delighted to have repassed the boundaries of separation, on the safe side of which she resolved to continue for the future.

In adhering to this resolution, she apprehended many severe conflicts with her friends, and trembled at her own weakness; but she strengthened her purpose by considering, that trials were the allotment of Christians, in a vale

of tears ; that power to overcome them, would be imparted, in answer to fervent supplication ; and that, in her persevering efforts to subdue the world, she would be sustained by the example, the grace, and the promise of her adorable Lord ; under these solemn convictions and impressions, she wrote the following

SONNET.

Adieu ! Ye scenes of visionary bliss !
 Your charms, fallacious, touch my heart no more.
 Vain are the pleasures of a world like this !
 I seek another, and a happier shore.
 Its distant glories ! how divinely grand ;
 Its matchless beauties ! how surpassing fair ;
 Its music steals e'en now upon mine ear.
 Oh ! how my spirit fairs to reach the strand ;
 But this frail bark ! how can it brave the main,
 How can it live, when Jordan's rolling tide,
 Shall o'er its shrouds in haughty triumph ride.
 Thy mighty arm, O Saviour ! can sustain,
 And I shall safe arrive, where seas nor storms annoy.
 And in the haven rest of ever-blooming joy.

CHAPTER XI.

"Why, is not this a lamentable thing, Grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies—these fashion-mongers—these *pardonnez-moys*."—*Shakspeare*.

THOUGH it is certainly the duty of a Christian to live in the world, it is impossible for him to be governed by the mighty and peculiar influence of his principles, without exciting a re-action from the opposite principles, with which, he is every moment brought into contact.

Miss Delaval was entitled to a certain station in polite society, and that station it was her duty to occupy. She did not shrink from it ; but her singular notions, and still more singular abstinence from many of the follies in which she once indulged, first perplexed, then amused, and at last exasperated her gay associates.

She had appeared at one or two parties ; with her father, she had called on all the former acquaintances of her mother ; and she had received at home a large assemblage of fashion. Her manners were unchanged ; her sweetness of disposition was even improved ; and her countenance displayed a gaiety of heart, which threw around her a charm of beauty, to which the highly rouged made-up creatures, that envied, while they complimented her, were strangers. Yet she was evidently not one of them. She could no longer be mistaken for a trifler. She was engaged in pursuits which were rational, virtuous, and useful ; and the truth was soon revealed by officious and garrulous domestics. Her maid had detected books of piety on her toilet ; the footman had accompanied her to various hovels and garrets, where she had distributed alms, and poured the balm of sympathy into the heart of sorrow. These facts were told to other waiting-women, and other footmen, who, with marvellous exaggerations, repeated them, till, by a very natural channel, they reached the parlour and the drawing-room. Sir George's carriage had likewise been seen driving regularly on a Sunday morning to a certain Episcopal chapel in Bedford-row, where the Preacher had, time immemorial, been stigmatized as a

horrid Evangelical. All these circumstances combined, led to the confirmed persuasion, that the Delavals were going religiously mad. Poor Sir George was astounded by the quizzical inquiries of his most intimate friends. One asked, with affected gravity, if he had issued orders never to be at home, except to the Elect? Another hoped, that when he came to dine with him, he should not be summoned to prayer, and doomed to hear an hour's homily in the form of a grace after meat, or as a refresher before dinner. A third, desired to know, if his coachman was yet converted, and whether he was not one of the gifted brethren who sung Psalms to a dead horse? Of all this, Sir George did not understand a syllable. And a few profane exclamations of surprise, and an oath or two, uttered with the full emphasis of audacious impiety, soon convinced the inquirers that Sir George was whole at heart—that *he* was untainted, and sound at the core. Suspicion, therefore, fell entirely upon Louisa. Accordingly, at one of those egregious public *breakfasts*, now so fashionable, which commonly commence in the afternoon, and from which the guests seldom retire till late at night, the defection of Miss Delaval from the world of fashion, formed the most prominent topic of censure and regret.

Mrs. Dormer, who did not enter till most of the company had assembled, was surprised to hear the name of her friend buzzed about in indistinct murmurs, and wondered to what the loud whispers of “prodigiously sorry,”—“excessively sad,”—“who could have thought it,”

—with other phrases of similar import, could possibly refer.

The Exquisite, of whom such honorable mention has been made in the former volume, perceiving Emily's astonishment, and mistaking the expression of her countenance for chagrin and dismay, advanced to offer her its condolence. "Ah! my dear Mrs. Dormer," it exclaimed, "how much you must be shocked; you really must be quite *detholée* at the thought; 'pon honor, ith really horrific."

"Will you have the goodness, Sir," said Emily, half provoked, and yet anxious to know what all this shrugging and mystery could mean; "Will you have the goodness to tell me, what has entitled Miss Delaval to the high honor of your condolence—what can she have done to awaken pity in your bosom, and to horrify that delectable face of yours?"

"O, ith a long story," he replied, "ith'nt it, Lord John," appealing to Lord John Fribble, "and I hate to tell long stories, ethpecially of a morning. It puth one out of breath, and makth one look so prodigiouthly pale, that one ith'nt onethelf for the whole of the day?"

To Emily's request, that he would be more explicit, she could only catch, in reply, the terms "Vathly horrific!"—"Dreadful disgrathe!"—"Poor Thir George!"

The Theatrical, was as little intelligible. He assured Mrs. Dormer, very gravely, that Louisa was performing the Fair Penitent—her first appearance in that character—that

"The very head and front of her offending,
Had this extent:—no more!"

And then he broke forth into a "rhapsody of words."

From Mrs. Gainham, however, Mrs. Dormer readily obtained the information she sought. With a look of unaffected commiseration, for the calamity which had befallen poor Miss Delaval, this lady dwelt on the indelible disgrace of becoming, what she termed, "one of the *Methodisses* ;"—"a misfortune," she said, "to any family, but especially to that of Sir George Delaval—none of the branches of which had ever been known to be insane—melancholy—or in the least flighty. Though some people had lately whispered, that a great, great-grandfather, of the late Lady Delaval, had been a little odd. This, however, she charitably hoped, might be scandal, for it was an ill-natured world."—"But, perhaps, Mrs. Dormer," she continued, "you can tell me all about it. Is the poor dear young lady so far gone as I have heard?"

"It is impossible for me, Madam," replied Emily, "to imagine what you may have heard to the disadvantage of Miss Delaval; all I know is, that she was with me this morning, and that I observed nothing remarkable either in her manner or conversation. She is, I think, the best and happiest creature upon earth. She is undoubtedly religious; but, if such religion as her's be madness, I sincerely wish she could bite all her acquaintance."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed a listening Dowager, who could contain herself no longer, "Mrs. Dormer, you surely cannot be infected too? Why, I am credibly informed, that the young lady you are speaking of is a rank Calvi-

nist—Methodist—or Evangelical—or whatever you may please to call it; that she mopes for hours together in her own room, reading a parcel of fanatical books; that she fatigues the footman to death by making him carry all over London, provisions, and articles of dress, for a set of vagabond mendicants, that ought not to be suffered to live, they are so wretched; and that she has been heard to say, she will never see another play—go to no more routs; and that she thinks some of the best, dearest creatures in the world, that are the life and soul of our parties, very *immoral*! I have no patience with such demure nonsense. I hate parsons in petticoats. The world is coming to a pretty pass, indeed! Every thing will soon be a sin, if these people are to be tolerated. For my part, I shall cut the Delavals!”

“Surely, your ladyship will not be so rash and cruel,” said Mrs. Dormer; “you ought rather, like the good Shepherd, to reclaim these wandering sheep, (though, I believe, Sir George is perfectly guiltless.) One smile of *yours* could not fail to win them back.”

Her ladyship keenly felt this ironical compliment, which fixed all the malicious eyes of the party upon her; for, in the days of her youth, (if the chronicles of fashion are to be credited,) she had tempted more than she had reclaimed.—Nothing abashed, however, she proceeded with greater violence to denounce Methodism—meaning, not the tenets, of which that term is descriptive—but Christianity—true Religion, both in the Establishment, and out of it. “Methodism,” observed her ladyship, “taints every

thing. We cannot enjoy any of our amusements in peace; there is always some scrupulous Saint to find fault with them, and among people of condition too. The citadel of fashion is actually besieged, by a set of canting religionists, and some of the garrison are parleying with the enemy. There is one species of insidious warfare," she continued, "which provokes me beyond all the rest, and that is, 'the *Preaching Traps*,' which are set every where to catch the unwary. The Circulating Library is no longer the opponent, but the ally of Methodism. Behind the title-page of a novel, lurks in ambush a dull Evangelical homily—'A world without souls,'—in which we might expect to enjoy a little *thoughtless* pleasure, turns out to be no more than an insolent libel upon all our privileges, and a direct attack upon the 'Canon law of our foundation.'—'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' leads us to converse with Saints in Buckram; and a 'Velvet Cushion,' which seems to promise nothing but soft repose, wounds the hand that presumes to touch it, with the poisoned, but concealed shafts of Methodism. In short, we are never secure against this pestilence, except when we sit down comfortably to read the Northern novels. Dear Sir Walter treats the whole race of Puritans as they deserve; and I sometimes enjoy exquisite delight in imagining, how their modern descendants writhe under his lash!"

This *burst* of feeling was warmly applauded by the company. All concurred in opinion with her ladyship that though works of fiction might be employed against religion and virtue, they

ought never to become their advocates ; and that what powerfully captivates the imagination, and touches the heart, is always to lend its mighty influence to the corruption of both. Though not uttered in so many words, this strip of its jargon and senseless qualifications, was the substance of what was said on the occasion. Heloise may mislead—but Cœlebs must not reclaim. Byron may pollute the minds of our youth—but Montgomery must not purify them. Such was the decision of this fashionable coterie !

The Rev. Mr. Sydney, familiarly known by the appellation, *Smug Sydney*, a *Petit Maitre* vendor of *Belles Lettres* and Infidelity, learning that Methodism was the subject of conversation, very condescendingly favored the company with his sentiments. He descanted with the nicest discrimination on what he termed the Patent Christianity of Wilberforce, in every thing so unlike the Christianity which he was accustomed to teach. Then, with a delicacy of humor, for which he is eminently distinguished, he ridiculed “the holy village of Clapham ;” and, at last, as if in confidence, broadly insinuated, that he thought the Braminical superstition far more elegant and innocent than the form, or rather the spirit of Christianity which he had denounced ; that is, that the religion of Mr. Wilberforce, and the Christians of Clapham, was, in his view, inferior to that of the Bramins and the Idolaters of Hindostan. Alluding to the dire calamity which had befallen Sir George Delaval, he concluded by observing, that though he never had the honor of dining with Sir George, yet did he

most sincerely deplore his domestic misfortune ; for, in his opinion, the scandal of Methodism was the very worst species of infamy.

A Physician of the party explained, in a manner the most lucid and satisfactory to the ladies, this particular description of mania, now so prevalent, and which had unhappily found its way into fashionable life, and suggested the propriety of erecting a hospital for the purpose of curing this most distressing of all maladies ; hinting, that from his professional knowledge and practice, he was the only man in the world qualified to superintend such an establishment.

A young Barrister was of opinion, that in every well-authenticated case, a statute of lunacy should be issued, and the miserable sufferer placed under the immediate protection of the Lord Chancellor. He likewise thought, that being seen once at Rowland Hill's Chapel, or six visits in succession to any Parish Church, or regular Place of Worship, where certain Clerical Maniacs held forth on Faith and Justification, would be sufficient evidence to establish a charge of insanity. He really wondered at the supineness of the Legislature, and should he ever be so fortunate as to get into Parliament, he would certainly bring forward some measure on the subject.

During this conversation, a personage, already known to our readers, stood eyeing the group with a look of ineffable disdain. It was the Misanthrope, that mysterious being, who, single in society, and alone amid a crowd, appeared as a rock in the vortex of folly and fashion, repelling and defying their force. "Is it

come to this," he at last abruptly exclaimed, "have I lived to hear devotion and charity stigmatized as a disgrace, and branded as a crime? Are such numberless victims incessantly sacrificed at the shrine of Vanity, and are its Ministers torn with anguish at the thought that one only has escaped their influence, and is risen beyond their power. I know that one; I saw her wandering like 'the lost Pleiade,' from her sphere, amidst the glare and madness of fashion, diffusing a mild, melancholy, but useless lustre; and I hail, with indescribable delight, her return to her native rank, among the constellations of intellect, virtue, honour, and truth. She has chosen Religion for her guide, her solace, and her friend; and, though for this she has abandoned the dissipation of the world, she will never have reason to regret the exchange."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Gainham, "I have always heard, poor thing, that after the death of her mother, and, indeed, during her long illness, that she was very melancholy, and that accounts for her weakness now. Poor dear! I *knows* how to sympathize with her. When dear Mr. Gainham died, all my friends were *afear'd* I should cry and mope myself into a poor way. Yes, yes, the truth on't is, Miss Delaval is, as we say, melancholy mad."

"That Miss Delaval was unhappy, or if you please, melancholy, at the period when she sought the consolations of Religion, I am very ready to admit," replied the Misanthrope. "But what could she do better? She was wretched, and she saw the Minister of Mercy point to a refuge, where the guilty obtain pardon, and the

weary repose. Christianity met her in her utmost distress, soothed her anguish, and wiped away her tears. Religion did that for her which she asked in vain from fortune, dissipation, and the world. If it be insinuated, that she chose Religion only because it was congenial with the morbid state of her feelings, because she was melancholy, and melancholy loves to deepen its own gloom, and to protract its own existence, she is now a living contradiction of the charge. Her's was the only cheerful countenance, the other night, when her father gave a rout, and she presided with all the grace of politeness, over the empty, heartless, and insipid throng. Filial piety glowed in her every look, while to gratify her parent, she condescended to listen to the infinite deal of nothing that was poured into her ears, and to take an apparent interest in follies, from which her heart was estranged. Yes, ye gay butterflies, of youthful sunshine! whose pleasures will die as your years increase, and your beauty fade, Louisa Delaval can be happy with you or without you. When she pleases, she can shine among you with colours as bright, and flutter with a motion as light, as airy, and as elegant; but her natural regions are beyond your gaze. Her sun will never go down—her felicity will survive, when those who ridicule her choice, and slander her reputation, 'lie howling.' ”

After this uncourtly harangue, the speaker did not wait for a reply; but, looking with an eye of evident compassion on Emily, and heaving a profound sigh, he bowed to Mrs. Gainham, and departed, leaving the company to censure, or to laugh, as they felt disposed.

CHAPTER XII.

a ————— Out of these convertites

"There is much matter to be heard and learned."

Shakespeare.

Dr. JOHNSON, in the Rambler, has finely distinguished the different effect produced on the mind by reading an author's works, and becoming personally and familiarly acquainted with him. "This transition," he observes, "is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect. Remotely we see nothing but spires of temples, and turrets of palaces, and imagine it the residence of splendor, grandeur, and magnificence; but when we have passed the gates, we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke." This noble figure strikingly illustrates not only the immediate subject for which it was adduced, but applies, in all its beauty and force, to that transition which is sometimes made from the abstract glories of religion, to the religious world; from the sublime doctrines and holy precepts of Christianity, as they are displayed in the New Testament, to their confused, deteriorated, and debased appearance in the opinions and lives of Christians. Louisa had yet to learn the nature of this transition, and to be reconciled to it. She had beheld some of the rarest specimens of embodied and practical Religion, and so near was their resemblance to the bright original archetype which shone on her heart,

and glowed in her imagination, that she conceived the theory and the practice to be uniformly the same; that the creed of all Christians would necessarily be scriptural, and their character a transcript of their creed—a mistake by no means uncommon, especially when persons, up to the period of their becoming religious, have lived only in the gay world.

This pleasing vision, however, Miss Delaval was not permitted long to indulge. A few days subsequent to the splendid *déjeuné*, given by Mrs Gainham, an elegant equipage drove up to the door of Sir George Delaval, and a lady of most prepossessing appearance, learning that Miss Delaval was at home, alighted. With a smile of genuine goodnature, and, at the same time, offering her hand to Louisa, she informed her, that ceremony between persons of the same family was unnecessary, and that she had waited upon her as a sister in the Lord, not to condole with her on the sneers and contempt with which she understood she was treated by her fashionable acquaintance, but to congratulate her, that she was deemed worthy to bear the reproach of the Cross. There was so much evident frankness and sincerity in this rather abrupt introduction of a subject, to which even the most intimate friends of Louisa had scarcely ventured to advert, that though it a little surprised, it did not offend her. It was uttered with all the suavity of good breeding, heightened and warmed by the enthusiastic fervor of religious feeling.

Louisa politely thanked her lovely visitor for the interest which she condescended to

take in her happiness, and assured her, that while she did nothing to provoke the enmity of the world, but what her duty to God required, she was willing to endure it. That she knew not what action of her's had drawn upon her the observation of others—she had never sought publicity—and her religious views and feelings she had retained in her own bosom. “If silent withdrawalment,” she added, “from scenes and pursuits which my conscience condemns, is to bring down upon me reproach, the approbation of my own mind will sustain me under it.”

“O yes!” replied the Honorable Miss Clement, “and if you belong, my dear, as I hope you do, to the chosen few that were in Christ from eternity, and who must in their time state suffer much tribulation, not only from the thoughtless world, but from the carnal professors of the age, you must prepare yourself to be ridiculed and despised by Saints as well as Sinners.” The times (she added) are deplorably dark. The once exploded doctrines of Popery resound almost from every pulpit. The reformed need reforming. Darkness covers the priests, and gross darkness the people. Ah! (she exclaimed, an eloquent tear starting in her fine eyes, and heaving a deep sigh,) they know nothing of the ‘union,’ and the ‘finished work;’ and the Lord’s dear family may traverse England through without learning one word of the precious truths, which are the joy and rejoicing of their hearts. The self-glorifying divinity of the day has robbed the King of Zion of his crown. But, amidst these abounding and fearful declensions, there are an enlightened, humble few that

seek him aright—in whose hearts he is ‘all in all.’ For the purposes of inquiry and devotion, we meet at each others’ houses every evening in the week, and most happy shall I be to introduce Miss Delaval to this chosen band.”

Louisa, astonished at the volubility of this address, yet prepossessed by the manners of Miss Clement, and struck with the earnestness of her zeal, requested that she would explain to her more at large the reasons on which she founded the very serious charges she had brought against an age, which, in the opinion of many wise and judicious persons, was peculiarly distinguished by a character of Christian piety and benevolence; and to inform her more particularly of the sentiments and views of the party she had eulogised in terms of such unqualified and exclusive approbation.”

“Most happy should I be, my dear Miss Delaval,” said Miss Clement, “to enter upon this wide field with you; but I am at present a novice in the system which we are endeavouring to form. But our friends meet at my house this evening; and you must do me the favor to join them. To some of them you are already known. You frequently met them in the gayest circles in the days of your vanity. Meet them now as the highly-favored founders of a new Apostolic Church.”

To this proposal, influenced by curiosity, more than by any expectation of being converted to a novel Religion, Louisa acceded; and Miss Clement, having obtained this, the principal object of her visit, took her leave to apprise the Lady Abbess of the sect of the chance of another proselyte.

Our readers will perceive, in a moment, that Miss Clement is one of the zealous Missionaries of the recent secession from the Established Church. The most remarkable characteristic of which is, that it is chiefly composed of ladies in the higher ranks of society, and a few young gentlemen, who are alternately their pupils and instructors.

Of their tenets and peculiarities, a tolerably accurate judgment may be formed from what passed at Louisa's visit to Miss Clement, the circumstances of which we will now proceed to detail.

On her arrival at ——— square, she was ushered into an elegant drawing-room. An organ graced one of the recesses. Sofas and Ottomans were drawn into a semicircle around a splendid loo table, on which stood two brilliant lamps; between these was placed a quarto bible, most superbly bound; while hymn books and smaller bibles were distributed in equal distances around it.

Joy sparkled in the eyes of Miss Clement, as she led her companion to the top of the room, where the orators and oracles, both male and female, usually sat. "I am glad you are thus early," she remarked, accosting Louisa, "it will afford me an opportunity of particularly introducing you to the K—s, the B—s, and the D—s. Oh! my dear, what delight it will afford them all to meet you here. I am highly privileged to-night. It is dear Mr. ———'s turn to expound the Scriptures. Ah! what a triumph had the truth over the world, when the Lord was pleased to open his eyes; and how nobly has he sacrificed all for Christ."

"You are speaking, I believe," said Louisa, "of a gentleman, who, in the honest fervor of his zeal, has forsaken St. Stephen's Chapel, to build one of his own?"—"The same," replied Miss Clement:—"A man of the best connexions, yet he is now so humble, that he has renounced them all for the little despised family of faith."

"But have I not understood," said Louisa, "that before Mr. ——— seceded from our Church, he was eminently pious and useful? Was he not the personal friend of some of the brightest luminaries among the Clergy, and the most devoted and holy Christians of the Laity?"

Miss Clement smiled; but it was more a smile of pity than of contempt, at the lamentable ignorance which these questions betrayed; and, at the moment she was endeavouring to evade them with the best grace in her power, the arrival of the gentleman to whom they referred, relieved her from her embarrassment.

The countenance of Mr. ———, though most prepossessing and amiable, at once proved to Louisa, that Nature had never formed him to wield the subtleties of Polemical Divinity, or to rise to eminence as the popular teacher of a new religion. His manners were bland, but not insinuating; and the consistence of his mind seemed to be too malleable, either to receive or impart any powerful and long continued impression. In short, he might, in her opinion, (and she was something of a physiognomist) do for the crowd, but not for the pedestal. He might be grouped in the back-ground of a picture, but not thrust forward as one of its principal figures; and whether the doctrines he had espoused were

true or false, she regretted that he had abandoned his walk of private usefulness to meet the public gaze, which she felt assured, would, soon or later, dazzle and confound him.

The company now rapidly assembled, and the air of fashion by which they were distinguished, would have given to the scene the appearance of a rout, had it not been for the Bibles and Hymn books, which occupied the place of cards, and the solemn and serious looks of the party, which indicated any purpose rather than amusement.

The Honorable Mr. — read a few verses of a hymn, and Miss Clement took her seat at the organ, and played, in exquisite style, a modern air to which they were adapted, accompanied by the voices of all present. There was something extremely impressive in this that spoke to the heart. Louisa felt and acknowledged it. The drawing-room, she said mentally, may be made the sanctuary of devotion as well as the Church. The worshippers hallow the place, and every house is a temple, where social piety breathes its aspirations after God.

The Reverend Mr. — who had recently vacated a living of considerable value for conscience sake—a refined scholar, and once a most useful preacher, offered up to Heaven a prayer, if that may be deemed a prayer which did not contain a single general petition, and which was rendered unintelligible to Louisa, by a certain mysterious jargon peculiar to the sect.

One of the gentlemen now requested the company to announce to their friends any new biblical discovery they might have made since they last

separated, declaring that he deemed it right to confess, that what he had delivered to them from the pulpit, on the preceding Sunday, he was now convinced was not agreeable to the analogy of faith. He had very erroneously stated, that the Elect partook of the evil consequences of the fall in Adam, as well as the Non-elect; he was now quite sure, that they never fell—that they were passed over in this dreadful lapse of human nature. They had not sinned in eternity, when, like Eve in the body of Adam before her creation, they were in Christ. They cannot sin in time, for they are without spot, and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke, both before their conversion and afterwards; for conversion effects no moral change in them; nor will they be able to sin after time, because the finished work of Christ, finished from before the foundation of the world, has rendered it impossible that they should personally stand in any relation of accountableness to their Creator and Governor; that it was Christ only that sustained any moral responsibility, and that the Elect were, from everlasting to everlasting, perfect and complete in him. There were many other errors which he had promulgated, which he took this opportunity of retracting.

The *ci devant* clergyman, to whom reference has just been made, also begged leave to qualify some of his assertions, delivered to his hearers the evening before, at his own chapel. New light had broken in upon his mind in the course of the day, and he lost no time in communicating to his friends his change of views. He had spoken, incautiously, he said, on the subject of

justification by faith, and of imputed righteousness; he was now persuaded, that faith has nothing actually to do with justification, that it was complete from all eternity without it; and that it is not only absurd, but wicked, to talk of the imputation either of righteousness, or of guilt. That Christ suffered for his own sins, and not for ours; that from eternity we were righteous, and Christ the sinner; that he bore the curse because he was really guilty; and that we enjoy the blessing, because we were, and for ever must be, really innocent and righteous. These, continued this profound divine, are my present views on this momentous subject.

“Brother,” said the late Member for —— “I thank you for this clear manifestation of truth. My dear wife stated the substance of what you have now said, in her sweet exposition at family worship this morning. She remarked, and very justly, that this view of Christ’s death was the necessary result of the doctrine of the Union, concerning which the professing world are at this moment so much in the dark.”

Here Mrs. —— interrupted her husband, and begged to be allowed to throw her portion of light upon this great point. The company were instantly hushed into most profound and attentive silence.

“All systems, said Mrs. —— are distinguished by certain grand characteristic principles; and these principles may be reduced again into some single dogma, which may be considered as the essence of the whole. And such, I think, is our doctrine of the Union in the system of divine truth, which, as genuine Biblists, we derive ex-

clusively from the Scriptures. When rightly understood, it relieves from all difficulties, tranquilizes the mind, and sets us free from every law, both human and divine.

“ This doctrine is founded upon a fact *most clearly revealed* in the Bible. That is, the pre-existence of all the elect people of God. A pre-existence which is coeval with that of Jesus Christ; He and they came into actual being at one and the same moment. When he was formed, they were formed in him. What we are accustomed to consider as creation, is not so, in fact, in reference to the church; it is only manifestation, so that all the Elect really existed millions of years, before any of them were born. They were the fair and lovely bride of the Lord, their husband. The most intimate endearments subsisted between them till the period of the Creation. And then this ungrateful wife, in her adulterous and restless dissatisfaction with her heavenly spouse, voluntarily repudiated herself, and descended into what is called by us her time state. But it was impossible to dissolve the union between her Lord and herself; and, therefore, he that was human before, and not God, for God only dwelt in him, and his humanity existed from eternity, condescended to become an infant, and to be born again (the only scriptural new birth.) He thus followed his bride into the wilderness, sinned for her, suffered for her, and has so transferred himself to her, that they are identified rather than united. Christ is his Elect, and his Elect is Christ; so that, whatever the one does, the other does; and as Christ's work is a finished work, the Elect have only to believe

their identity with him. This constitutes the whole of faith and obedience. They have nothing to repent of, or to forsake, for all their sins, past, present, and to come, are not theirs, but Christ's; they have nothing to perform, for all Christ's righteousness is not his, but theirs. They have only to continue in their time state, to accomplish the number of Christ's sins, and, having done so, to depart in peace. Regeneration, and what is ignorantly termed the work of the Holy Spirit, are nothing better than Popish errors, designed to flatter the self-righteous pride of the children of perdition."*

Mrs. ——— received the warmest thanks of the assembly, for her judicious and simple elucidation of a most profound doctrine of the Gospel; and a young lady, apparently rising to oracular distinction, begged to know by what general canon of interpretation Mrs. ——— had been enabled to arrive at such clear views of biblical truth.

"In the first place," said Mrs. ——— "I read nothing but the Bible; I am strictly a Biblical. In the next place, I hear nobody but my husband, and he borrows his illumination from me; and the rule of interpretation, which I have adhered to, is simply this—To understand all the passages of Scripture, which have heretofore been considered figurative and allegorical in their

* See not only Mr. Simons's letter, which the Seceders complain has not done them justice, but observations upon that letter by a Clergyman of the Establishment, which substantially corroborates every statement, which it was avowedly written to controvert. Surely, an honest man, holding such sentiments, ought to quit the Church—for Bedlam.

strict and literal sense ; and *vice versa*, to understand all that have been deemed literal and plain, as allegorical and figurative. This, she said, is my key to the treasury of divine knowledge. " Adopt it, my dear, and you will soon be as wise as all your teachers."

After these retractions and statements, the more direct business of the evening commenced. The Bible was opened with great solemnity, by the gentleman on whom the task of exposition devolved, who immediately proceeded to unfold the mysteries of our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The parable, he said, was a real history ; yet were the facts it contained symbols of hidden truths, which only the enlightened of the Lord's dear family were privileged to understand. The blind guides, the carnal expounders of holy scripture were altogether ignorant of the sweet and soul refreshing doctrines wrapt up in it. Perhaps it had never occurred to his present audience, spiritual and profound as many of them confessedly were, to seek for this invaluable treasure. He had sought, and had happily found it. The rich man, he said, was the world, and Lazarus was Christ. The world clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, that is, dressed in the garb of self-righteousness and pride, and living on sin and vanity, was visited by Christ in the days of his flesh ; but, as he was poor and destitute, the world would not open its doors to receive him, but left him a neglected beggar to perish at its gate. The wounds of Lazarus, which were loathsomely exposed to the view of the passing multitude, were intended

to represent the sufferings of Christ, for he was wounded for our transgressions; the dogs which licked these wounds were the disciples, the humble friends and followers of our spiritual Lazarus; and the nauseous act ascribed to them, was to be considered as descriptive of their faith; for faith derives its nourishment from a suffering Saviour, and lives upon what the world abhors.”*

When the company broke up, Miss Clement, and half a dozen of her fellow novitiates in this new school of Divinity, surrounded Louisa, anxious to learn whether any impression favorable to their views had been made upon her mind. To their pressing inquiries, she replied in general terms; she admired sincerity and zeal; she had certainly heard opinions, the novelty of which surprised her. But as Scripture was referred to as their only source, she would examine them by this standard. There was, however, a great deal she could not understand; but, early taught to reverence sacred mysteries, if she perceived that what had perplexed and confused her was supported by unerring testimony she should feel herself bound implicitly to believe it. This was something; but not all that her sanguine friends desired; there was more caution than they wished to see, which augured against their scheme of Proselytism; yet hoping the best, one begged her to take home a sweet letter she had received from a

* Be it remembered, that the person who delivered these gross absurdities, was not an illiterate mechanic, but a scholar and a gentleman. At least he passed through one of the Universities with credit.

“It ought to be the general issue of and as it involves the obligation in regard to this.”

“But, for the Saviour a seed to success commensurate sufferings and death, is not so much as one and that consequently his blood in vain. left entirely dependent all might have used the same way; and rejected him exactly kind actually do. But God would have given quities of a ruined mere chance, whether ever obtain mercy conceive this. In fact thus left to chance. a chosen people, who to Christ to be redeemed to be saved by his were so given him, he will lose so much as of God alone knows. But many, even a multitude, out of every kind people and nation.

“As this doctrine relative obligation, as salvation belongs exclu-

ive of extraordinary abilities, and whose knowledge of their abstract points was most perfect. Another requested her to read a manuscript which was preached by the ministers of their ministers, with the perusal of which we were obliged, as an act of special favour, and all concurred in entreating her to honour them with her company as often as possible.

The character and rank of the parties which supported the manuscript, their known benevolence, merit, and good sense, up to the period of their accession, induced Louisa to regard them as well-instructed men with respectful esteem. So soon the manuscript put into her hands, as a letter they were utterly incomprehensible. She therefore, wrote to her venerable friend, Mr. Evelyn, on the subject; and soon after received a letter, in reply; a few extracts from which we shall lay before our readers.

“I am, my dear Louisa, that I am far from being a Unitarian. I do not think, that those who separate themselves from our Establishment, are increasing the worse Christians. But as we are surrounded with such fearful dangers of division, dissent, and intolerance, the Unitarian view is a moral pestilence, which is spreading over it blight the fairest promises of unity and virtue among a class of persons who ought to have been, and who once possessed it in the ornament and glory of their

“The mission which exaggerates the subtle doctrines of our Religion into gross absurd-

which believes propositions, alike scripture and common sense, is a mental imbecility which has scarcely the history of human extravagance or nonsense, and to call it mysterious at all times too much the practice of the world but the world does not furnish instances of folly and weakness as you do to me in your account of what passed the evening of your visit to Miss To prove this strong assertion, I instance the two particulars concerning the person of Christ, and what these people mean by denominating the union between Christ and Church.

The co-existence of the Son of God was the existence of his Divine Nature, and of his Humanity. Of Jesus Christ, considered as a human being, we read that he was born at a given period; that his soul and body were united by the communication of the Holy Ghost—testimony of his ineffable power; and that, as he grew in wisdom and in stature, he grew in favor with God and man. *So far as man*, he is a creature; and to say of him that it existed from eternity, is a contradiction in terms; for that which is without beginning, exists necessarily; and that which exists necessarily, is self-existent, and must be so. This strictly applies to the true and proper divinity of Him, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of the Father;" but borders on blasphemy when it is applied to mere humanity. To rob Christ of his divinity, of his divine nature, which the Sece-

lady of extraordinary abilities, and whose knowledge of these abstruse points was most profound. Another requested her to read a manuscript sermon, which was preached by the most eminent of their ministers, with the perusal of which she was indulged, as an act of special kindness; and all concurred in entreating her to favour them with her company as often as possible.

The character and rank of the parties which composed this assemblage, their known benevolence, piety, and good sense, up to the period of their secession, disposed Louisa to regard what she had heard from them with respectful attention. She read the manuscripts put into her hands; but to her they were utterly incomprehensible. She, therefore, wrote to her venerable friend, Mr. Evelyn, on the subject; and from him she received a letter, in reply; a few extracts from which we shall lay before our readers.

* * * * *

“ You know, my dearest Louisa, that I am far from being a bigot. I do not think, that those who separate themselves from our Establishment, are therefore the worse Christians. But this new secession is marked with such fearful characters of delusion, heresy, and intolerance, that I cannot but view it as a moral pestilence, which has suddenly risen to blight the fairest prospects of piety and virtue among a class of persons who might have been, and who once promised to be, the ornament and glory of their age.

“ The infatuation which exaggerates the sublime doctrines of our Religion into gross absur-

dities, and which believes propositions, alike opposed by Scripture and common sense, is a species of mental imbecility which has scarcely its parallel in the history of human extravagance. To talk nonsense, and to call it mystery, has been at all times too much the practice of enthusiasts, but the world does not furnish such specimens of folly and weakness as you have detailed to me in your account of what you heard on the evening of your visit to Miss Clement. To prove this strong assertion, I need only instance the two particulars concerning the person of Christ, and what these people are so fond of denominating the union between Him and his Church.

“The pre-existence of the Son of God was the pre-existence of his Divine Nature, and not of his Humanity. Of Jesus Christ, considered as a human being, we read that he was born at a given period; that his soul and body were the communication of the Holy Ghost—the creation of his ineffable power; and that, from his infancy, he grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man. *So far* as he is *human*, he is a creature; and to say of a creature, that it existed from eternity, is a contradiction in terms; for that which is without beginning, exists necessarily; and that which exists necessarily, is self-existent, and must be God. This strictly applies to the true and proper Divinity of Him, who is “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;” but borders on blasphemy when applied to mere humanity. To rob Christ of the glory of his divine nature, which the Sece-

ders do, and yet to ascribe to Him eternity of being, is palpably absurd. And the same remark applies to the eternal union, which is said to subsist between this infinite creature, and his redeemed people. Indeed, according to this doctrine, they are all equally eternal. There was, in fact, no Church till after the fall of Adam, as there could be no redemption until the redeemed were first lost. The Church had a beginning, has been susceptible of increase, and is not yet complete—so that to speak of it as existing from eternity, that is, existing necessarily, is to clothe it with an essential attribute of Deity; and if this is not contended for—if driven to admit that the Church actually consists of believers, and that believers could have no real existence before-time, what can be meant by a union, that was formed anterior to the foundation of the world? In order to the union of parties, it is necessary that those parties exist. A vital, spiritual, and holy union, between the Redeemer and his people, is a doctrine of Scripture plainly revealed, and of the highest importance; but the view of it, taken by this new school of theology, renders it a nonentity.

“But the delusion of the Seceders does not terminate here—it has led them to indulge the overweening conceit, that the belief of these extravagances constitutes all the real religion that now exists in Christendom. They have not merely departed from our Church, but they stand alone in the Christian world. According to them, we are all, both Churchmen and Dissenters, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. Christianity, it seems, has

honored these ladies and gentlemen with its exclusive regard. They possess the 'Urim and the Thummin.'—All the wisdom and all the truth. God is with them, and with them alone. This is implied, in their absolute renunciation of all fellowship with other Christians, and it is more than implied in their sermons and conversations."

* * * * *

"That in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, any new discovery should be made in divinity, which is to explode every doctrine that has preceded it, and which has been deemed venerable and sacred by the brightest luminaries of the Church, is to suppose a miracle of more stupendous magnitude than any which have hitherto been wrought in defence of the Gospel.

"Novelties in Religion, when they regard the essential articles of the Christian faith, may be very safely rejected without examination. That they are new, is a *prima facie* evidence that they are false."

* * * * *

"It appears to me, that the system of these new Christians, if a system it may be called, is a heterogeneous combination of most of the heresies, which have separately, and at different times, divided the Church, and corrupted the truth; in connexion with absurdities which no sect that has yet arisen has been weak enough to entertain. Their notion of the person of Christ comprehends the errors of the Sabellians and Arians; to which they add, the Supralapsa-

rian folly, that the Elect, as well as the Father, actually dwelt in Christ from all eternity.

“They deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, and restrict the influence, which they dignify with this sacred name, simply to the illumination of the mind, without any direct agency, or spiritual communication to the soul. Their views of the atonement are equally unscriptural. The doctrine of a *vicarious* sacrifice, they wholly reject, or so explain away, that it means nothing. In fact, they are Sandemanians, without maintaining those parts of the system which secure the interests of purity. On the contrary, their views of moral obligation altogether subvert every idea of personal responsibility; this they transfer from believers to the Saviour, and require good works, not as the absolute demand of the great Law-giver, not as flowing from a holy principle, super-induced by divine grace into the soul, conforming it to the original standard of moral perfection—but merely as ‘*suitable results*,’ which are to be performed where there is no obligation, and without divine assistance. The carnal mind is to subdue itself. The flesh is to crucify the flesh; and all this where there is no real necessity for making a single effort, or vanquishing a single lust.”

“It is very easy to perceive, in this extraordinary *melange* of absurdities, an evident tendency to all the characteristic doctrines of Socinianism. If Jesus Christ and his Church existed in the same sense, together from eternity, then they did not exist at all, *but in the divine purpose*; and this Socinians will readily admit. And if Christ did not die for the *sins of others*, but for

his own; if there was nothing *vicarious* in his death, then was not that death an atonement; and if divine influence extends only to the bestowment of knowledge on those who seek it in the Scriptures, the Socinians and the Seceders are likewise, on this point, substantially one."

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"The great mistake which these estimable persons committed at the first, and which hurried them into all the extravagances which have marked their singular career, was imagining that the moment they became Christians, they were qualified to become teachers of Christianity. Piety is one thing—theology another. A man may be sincerely devout, at the same time that his views are confused, and his mind but ill instructed in the great doctrines of the Gospel. Divinity must be studied precisely as we study any other science. There are no such beings as intuitive divines."

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"It is impossible not to admire the reverence with which the Seceders regard the sacred volume. But even the Scriptures may be read too exclusively. They only indeed possess the weight of authority; through their medium alone, Christians are to derive their religion. But when all the treasures of sanctified learning, which have been accumulating since the days of the Apostles, and with which it has pleased Divine Providence to enrich the Church, are not only neglected, but deprecated and despised; this discovers not the humility of faith, but the arrogance of conceit. Surely, we cannot consent

to regard as a dead letter, the labours of the wise and good, which have critically adjusted the meaning of the sacred page, elucidated its difficulties, and systematised its truths. Nor are these religionists aware of their own inconsistency on this very point. If nothing but the Bible is to be read, nothing but the Bible ought to be heard. Oral instruction must detract quite as much from the exclusive claims of the Scriptures, as written treatises. And who would not infinitely rather avail himself of the Homilies of the Christian fathers, and the pious and enlightened works of a Hopkins or a Doddridge, than listen to a crude, ill-digested discourse of a youthful modern Seceder, unsettled in his views, and undetermined in his principles."

* * * * *

"But that which in my view in these people, merits the severest reprehension, is the arrogance of their bigotry, and the superciliousness of their spirit. They are sadly distinguished by a haughty contempt of all from whom they differ, and by an intolerance, which impels them to proselyte where they can, and cordially to hate where they cannot. I am afraid, that Rousseau, in describing the Mystics, has drawn a too-accurate portrait of this self-constituted, exclusive, and any thing but Catholic Church.

"What sets me most against these devotees by profession, is, that affectation of manners, which renders them insensible to humanity; that excessive pride, which makes them look down with pity upon the rest of mankind. If ever they condescend to stoop from their imaginary elevation to do an act of charity, it is

always done in a manner extremely mortifying to the object; their pity is so cruel and insulting; their justice is so rigid, their charity so severe, their zeal so bitter, their contempt so much like hatred, that even the insensibility of the rest of the world is less cruel than their pity. Their love for Heaven serves them as an excuse for loving nobody upon earth. The more detached they affect to be from the world, the more they expect from it; and one would think, their devotion to God is excited only that they may have a pretext to exercise his authority over the rest of his creatures."

This letter, together with her own reflections, soon induced Louisa to discontinue her visits to her friends of the Secession. This they observed with considerable alarm. At first, they plied her with arguments, with flattery, and persuasions; but finding all their efforts vain, they soon left her to the impenetrable darkness which had enveloped her mind; and a distant salutation was all the notice which she could at last obtain from those, who, a few weeks before, were dying for her friendship. She is become unto them "as an heathen and a publican."

Sir George Delaval, not a little alarmed at what he daily witnessed of his daughter's piety, which every body taught him to consider as Methodism, and fanatical folly, was anxious to remove her from town; he therefore suggested to her, that a visit to his estate in Buckinghamshire, might be beneficial to her health; and that there she would enjoy the converse of her maternal aunt, who was a very pious good woman, and who might, perhaps, induce her to abandon

some of her singular notions. Glad to escape from scenes so uncongenial with her feelings, Louisa readily consented to spend a few months with her relative.

CHAPTER XIII.

"She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and item goes to Church."

Comper.

MISS ELMER, denominated by Sir George Delaval a "a good religious woman," and by whose instructions, and advice, he hoped to reclaim Louisa from her fanaticism, it will be recollected by our readers, was the elder sister of Lady Delaval. And it now remains to be told that after having passed the greater part of her life amidst the gaities and follies of the world, she retired in disgust, to spend the remnant of her days in seclusion. Louisa had seen little of her for several years; but learning that she was no longer a creature of fashion, but that she attended to the duties of piety, she hoped to enjoy much tranquil pleasure in her company. Prior to this desirable change in her character, she knew that her mind was frivolous, and her temper unamiable. But what is there that Religion cannot dignify and improve. It can awaken the dormant intellect, and smooth the most rugged disposition. Thus reasoned Louisa; and had Miss Elmer been a Christian indeed, she would

have reasoned justly. Unhappily she was doomed to behold a specimen of religious profession, which though totally different from what she had recently witnessed, was quite as repulsive to her feelings; and that specimen, as the production of it may be useful, we will present to the reader.

Miss Elmer had shone the most distinguished Belle of Fashion, till eclipsed by a brighter luminary. Her early life presented one unceasing round of dissipation; and now amidst the loneliness of celibacy, and the infirmities of age, she is still a trifler.

In youth she was a coquet; and at this moment she has all the airs of coquetish beauty without any of its claims; the volatility of youth without its excuse, and the garrulity of age without the good sense which renders it venerable; yet with all these follies she blends an extraordinary zeal for the forms of religion; a circumstance which may excite surprise in the superficial observer, who is not aware of the intimate connection, which often subsists between the vanities of youth, and the Pharisaicism of old age.

Pride and selfishness may be dressed in different garbs, without losing an atom of their identity. She that ceases to be a fashionable Belle, may become a highly approved and accredited Saint; and though apparently another character may be substantially the same; this was the case with Miss Elmer. Having outlived her charms, and the consequent admiration which personal beauty inspires, she perceived with the keenest anguish, that men of distinction stu-

diously avoided her; while she was constantly surrounded with Irish fortune-hunters, and ruined gamblers. These she dismissed in rapid succession, objecting, not to the individuals, but to their desperate fortune, till finding herself utterly deserted, she left a world which had afforded her so little pleasure, and entered in retirement upon a profession of religion. But that piety which is merely the effect of disappointed ambition, or of mortified vanity, is no more than a refuge in which these dispositions seek repose and encouragement, rather than a grave in which they ought to be for ever buried; and it is not only possible, but a very common expedient to debase Christianity, by uniting its hallowed name with these detestable vices of the human heart. Not that the Gospel is really changed, or polluted by such alliance. Its nature is immutable; nor can it ever be identified with the crimes and follies of its mistaken, or insincere votaries, who only deceive themselves by assuming its character, while they are really strangers to its principles. The best things when abused, often become most pernicious in their influence: thus a false hope is often more ruinous than none at all. And he that dreams of heaven, while he is in the road to destruction, is less likely to be awakened to a sense of his danger, than the individual who is pursuing the same course, with a full consciousness of his guilt; yet does not this lessen the value of a good hope through grace. Notwithstanding the baseness of its counterfeits, it is sterling gold, and bears the image and superscription of Heaven. Religion, if it does not improve, ge-

nerally depraves ; and a Pharisaical Christianity, as it regards the person who maintains it, is worse than no Christianity. Thus those who merely profess, and call themselves Christians, are often in a more deplorable moral condition, than the avowed enemies of Christ. If the mind be totally destitute of all sense of religion, it is in a more favourable disposition to receive its truth, and to admit its claims, than if it were previously possessed and held in thralldom, by a faith that is erroneous and delusive.

It was Miss Elmer's misfortune to view the Gospel through the obscuring and debasing medium of the world. Thus she considered it as a system, which in proportion to the irksomeness of the duties it imposed, gratified the selfishness of the heart, which submitted to its authority ; yet had she no very exalted views of the nature of these duties. She knew nothing of the Christian character, but its cold and heartless exterior. It was with her altogether a thing of form. Form was the essence of her piety, and not the outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace. All that she conceived it to embrace, was an attendance on Divine Service twice on a Sunday, and every prayer-day in the week ; reading at Easter and Christmas, and the other holy festivals, the Companion to the Altar ; and receiving the Sacrament in due course, when it was administered at her own Parish Church.

In the performance of these good works, Miss Elmer spent all the time which she did not waste in cards and scandal, in exhausting the patience of her acquaintance, and destroying the

happiness of her miserable dependants. These were her redeeming duties which atoned for the sins of her whole life. Like the *Patens*, the *Aves*, and the *Credos* of the Papists, they were her merits in the sight of Heaven, which relieved her from all the obligations of social and practical virtue, and furnished her with a never-failing source of self-complacency.

“With temper as envenomed as an asp,” she virulently traduces all that she envies and hates—that is, all the young and the happy. But that which she detests with a deep and unappeasable inveteracy, is true Religion. Whenever she happens to be brought in contact with it, she shrinks with instinctive aversion. She cannot endure the revealing light which it sheds upon the hideous vices of her character, and which makes her appear odious even to herself.

The arrival of Louisa at her father’s mansion was hailed by the domestics and the tenantry with unfeigned satisfaction. Even Miss Elmer received her with apparent fondness, and for a few days her face relaxed from its habitual expression of severity ; and something like a gleam of social pleasure sparkled in her eyes. But the youth and beauty, and, above all, the sweet and amiable piety of her niece, soon vanquished all her good humor ; she felt them as an incessant reproach. At first she attempted to conceal her envy and chagrin, but having never been accustomed to govern her temper, the restraint which she endeavoured to impose upon it, only exasperated it the more, and at length it burst forth in all its vindictive fury. Every spe-

cies of annoyance, which her ingenious malice could invent, was directed against the comfort of Louisa. The most virulent productions of the age, which denounced Evangelical Religion, and calumniated its friends, she procured from her very Orthodox neighbour, the Rector and insisted upon reading them aloud, for the purpose of converting her from the dangerous errors which, to the disgrace of her family, she had imbibed. The worthy priest too condescended to aid her laudable zeal; and whenever Louisa appeared at Church, she was assailed from the pulpit as a schismatic, and a subverter of the faith. The merits of these excellent discourses were discussed at all the card-parties in the parish, and their Reverend Author complimented as a Pillar of the Establishment in these degenerate and heretical times. Thus encouraged, his declamatory violence increased, and so personal did his addresses at last become, that Louisa, in self-defence, was obliged to discontinue her attendance on his ministry. She was thus driven, in spite of herself, to a dissenting place of worship in the neighbourhood, which the Rector had more than once stigmatised as the synagogue of Satan, and a school of Atheism and Disloyalty. Here she was delighted to witness, under a humble roof, a crowded and an attentive congregation of villagers, surrounding the altar of their God; while a venerable and sensible man, in simple and fervid prayer, led their devotions. The sermon reminded her of what he had been accustomed to hear at Beaulieu. It was rational and orthodox; precisely according with the views she had been taught to entertain of Chris-

tianity, and delivered with a tender energy, a warmth of affection, which "well became a minister of grace to guilty men." During its progress, she felt that the communion of Saints is not confined to any Church, and that genuine devotion is of no sect.

The tidings, that Miss Delaval had made her appearance at a conventicle, were soon diffused for several miles round the country. The good people of the Meeting-house, in their honest simplicity and zeal, imagined that her conversion would speedily follow; and were loud in their commendations of her liberality and goodness. But Miss Elmer and the Rector were enraged beyond all bounds of decorum. The former indulged her spleen by repeating every story she could invent, or had ever heard against hypocrites, and *vital* Christians. She felt herself scandalised and degraded, that any relation of her's should betray the low-born and vulgar propensity of herding with the common multitude, in a place little better than a barn, for the purpose of hearing an inspired tinker or cobbler hold forth on the sublime mysteries of the Christian faith, which he was too ignorant to explain, and which his congregation could not possibly understand. The latter preached his most-admired sermon on this subject over again, urging all his old arguments with greater vehemence, and exulting with more than wonted delight in his imaginary triumphs—

"Thrice he vanquished all his foes,
And thrice he slew the slain."

Louisa pitied the acrimony of the one, and regretted the unchristian intolerance of the other; while the people flocked in great numbers to the Chapel; so that in proportion as the Clergyman preached against Dissenters, the cause of dissent evidently advanced. With Miss Delaval, an occasional attendance on the worship of Separatists from the establishment, was a necessity which she deplored. It was not the dictate of choice; yet she was no bigot: and if the Shekinah left the Church, she felt it to be her duty to seek it where it was to be found. A pulpit without the Gospel had no sacredness in her eyes; and wherever she discovered the palladium, there, in her view, was the temple. She had imbibed too much of the spirit of Christ to exalt any Church above Christianity.

On becoming acquainted with some of the most respectable members of the dissenting congregation, she perceived with pleasure the great advantage which they had derived from a judicious and well-instructed Ministry. She found them intelligent, if not highly polished; and if they had neglected to cultivate some of the lighter branches of literature, she was glad to learn, that they had repaired this defect in making themselves familiar with the various subjects of solid and general knowledge. She would have liked them better, had their views of religious discipline been less rigorous and exclusive. If she hated the intolerance of the Church, she as strongly disapproved of the sectarian spirit of the Meeting; and she deeply lamented, that confessedly good people should

sacrifice so much of the best qualities of Religion on the altar of Party. She sighed for the period, when men will unite as Christians, and not divide as sects; when all distinctions will cease, but those which separate holiness from sin, and the universal church from the world.

Of all the disgusting forms under which she had contemplated a profession of Christianity, that under which her aunt, and her reverend co-adjutor presented themselves, was the most offensive. It had no redeeming excellence, and was not associated with a single virtue. Its zeal was persecution, and its love selfishness. True religion was its utter aversion; genuine Christians, its calumniated victims.

The amiable temper of Louisa, her unaffected benevolence and uniform devotedness to the noblest pursuits of an intelligent nature, exposed her every day to new insults from her enraged and bigoted relative. In vain did she endeavor to disarm her enmity, by returning good for evil, by patiently enduring reproaches she did not deserve; her kindness was spurned with contempt, and her forbearance was stigmatised as meanness of spirit. She exasperated, where she intended to soothe; and provoked, where it was her wish to conciliate.

She was frequently the object of bitter and general invectives; but Scandal had not dared to taint her character. Her piety had been exaggerated into enthusiasm, and her virtues into weaknesses. But her reputation was pure from the slightest imputation. She was accustomed to visit the cottages of her father's tenantry, for

the benevolent purposes of providing instruction for their minds, and comfort for their families. Her walks of usefulness were often long and wearisome ; but she was never deterred from ministering to the wants of others by any considerations for herself. In doing good, she gathered the richest sweets of enjoyment ; and, in promoting the happiness of the poor, she augmented her own. On one of these excursions, a gentleman, who was riding leisurely along the road, was seen to alight from his horse, and to give his arm to Miss Delaval, which she readily accepted ; they visited several of the cottages together, and, at their parting, Louisa was observed to speak to him with peculiar earnestness, and to shed tears. These facts were communicated to the Rector, who lost no time in making Miss Elmer acquainted with them. It was agreed between them not to mention the circumstances to Miss Delaval, but to employ vigilant emissaries to watch the progress of what they did not doubt would prove to be a clandestine amour. Miss Elmer observing, very charitably, that she always suspected people who appeared to be so much better than their neighbours ; she never knew a Saint that was not a Hypocrite. Religion was a cloak for every thing evil, and she should not wonder if this cavalier, who was unknown to every body, turned out to be some converted methodist mechanic, with whom her niece was anxious to take a trip to Gretna Green. But she would take good care to disappoint the minx of her projected excursion. She would let Sir George into the secret ; that is, as soon as she was let into it her-

self. Several days however passed, and it was still covered with an impenetrable veil. Louisa took her usual walks, and distributed her usual bounty without any thing occurring, either to awaken the suspicion, or to gratify the curiosity of her self-appointed Duenna. At length, towards the dusk of the evening of a fine day, the lady and her mysterious companion were engaged in very earnest conversation, in an avenue which led from the house to the road. Miss Elmer almost breathless with anxiety, placed herself in a convenient station to observe and to hear what passed. But she could only indistinctly catch the words—friendship, happiness, love, marriage, difficulties, and misfortunes. During part of his address, the stranger's voice faltered; he was speaking with passionate interest on a subject, which evidently awakened sympathy in the bosom of his companion; and she became greatly agitated. They both rested for a few moments on a rustic bench. Louisa then presented him with a small packet, and he departed. What can all this mean, said the impatient Miss Elmer, as she glided unperceived by Louisa to the mansion. This is most extraordinary, she muttered to herself; I hate all mystery, where there is mystery, there generally is imprudence, and something worse. Yet did she not, in her conscience, believe, that there could be the least impropriety in the conduct of her niece—and lest inquiry should explain away all that wore the appearance of suspicion, and thus deprive her of the pleasure of circulating scandal to the injury of her fair fame, she resolved not to mention the circumstances to

Louisa, but to detail them to her acquaintances, as they had come to her knowledge, interspersed with dark hints, and malignant inuendoes, which would not fail to produce the effect she desired, and at the same time exonerate her from all blame. What had taken place was enough to justify her apprehensions, and she had an undoubted right to put what construction upon it she pleased. Accordingly, while Louisa, happy in her innocence, was constantly emitting from her countenance the "soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy," her aunt was endeavoring to obscure that brightness, by throwing around her the mirky clouds of calumny; and so dense did these at last become, that many young ladies in the neighborhood were half afraid to approach her, lest they should be involved in the same darkness. The victims of scandal are generally the last to hear the reproaches under which their character suffers, and which alienate from them the smiles and confidence of friendship. This was the case with Miss Delaval—nor was she aware, that a whisper, unfriendly to her reputation, had ever been uttered, till she heard it in distant thunder. It burst upon her at last with a terrible explosion, in a violent letter from her father, who at the same time informed her of a very important change which he had thought proper to make in his family.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Sic a wife as Willie had
I wad nae gie a Button for her."

Burns.

WHEN a man becomes a widower on the wrong side of fifty, and resolves to marry again, he is in great danger of playing the fool; especially if his former marriage was the result of mercenary speculation, rather than of disinterested attachment. Thus it generally happens, that when the prudent calculators of five-and-twenty turn gay and impassioned Lotharios at sixty, they present a most ludicrous exhibition of human weakness. A hoary headed, gouty lover, throwing off his flannel and surtout, and putting on the costume of a youthful beau, strutting, smiling, and even dancing with all the exhilaration of his boyhood, is viewed by the benevolent with pity and by the malicious with contempt. And when there is a marvellous disparity of years between the adorer and the goddess of his nauseous idolatry, the lady, if she accept his addresses, very justly becomes the object of universal derision.

In evil hour, Sir George Delaval persuaded himself, that a man ought to be in love once in his life; and as he had never been so fortunate, that it was now high time for him to indulge the tender passion. Accordingly he put himself upon a course of training, by reading pathetic love-*tales*, and storing his memory with exquisite passages from the amatory poets.

Lalla Rookh was his supreme favourite. The "Light of the Harem" dissolved his soul in tenderness, and he often repeated, with exstasy, to every listening fair one, with whom he could obtain a *tête à tête*,

"There's a bliss beyond all that the Minstrel has told,
When two that are link'd in one heavenly tie,
With hearts never changing, and love never cold,
Love on through all ill, and love on till they die ;
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss ;
And, Oh ! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this ! It is this."

From these and other symptoms, equally unequivocal, it was soon whispered abroad, that Sir George Delaval, like another Cœlebs, was in search of a wife. This welcome intelligence reached the ears of a widow, who had long wished to doff her weeds. Her acquaintance with the Delavals was very slight, yet, with a little dextrous finesse, she hoped to improve it into intimacy. She was resolved on becoming Lady Delaval, and laid her plans accordingly. Though she had never been taught in the school of the Pathetics, and though a ray of poetry had never beamed from her fancy, yet now the fit was on him, she affected to Sir George a perfect congeniality of taste. Dear sensibility was her peculiar weakness ; and yet it was a weakness she would not be deprived of for the world. All the poems she had read for the occasion, verses of which she repeated with enthusiasm, were "sweet," and "pretty." If she ever married again, a thing which she did not by any means contemplate, poetry should form the charm of

the union ; her last husband, poor man, had no soul, he had been rather a clog than a companion ; mind—mind was indispensable to happiness in the conjugal state. Where there was mind, there was always feeling ; and, if there was no feeling, she was sure there could be no enjoyment. Then she would softly languish and sigh, and throw her fine and majestic person into every interesting attitude, that was likely to touch the susceptible bosom of her admirer. In short, she played her cards as an artful woman knows how, and with complete success. The worthy Baronet fell into the snare so insidiously laid for him, and Mrs. Danvers, after a brief courtship, was announced to the world as Lady Delaval.

As Ethiopians do not change their skins, nor Leopards their spots, a knowledge of Mrs. Danvers' previous history and character will enable us to appreciate the domestic prospects of Sir George, and the trials which awaited Louisa.

The late Mr. Danvers was a quiet, easy, good-natured man, who, by the death of his father, was early left to the management of a handsome estate, on which, both from inclination and habit, he spent the greater part of his time, hunting, shooting, and fishing ; and taking occasional excursions in his immediate neighbourhood. On one of these it was his fortune to meet at a County Ball the beautiful Miss Letitia Scraggs, of whom he became instantly enamoured. The friends of the Lady, proud of her conquest, and remembering an adage somewhat musty, and which we need not repeat, urged a speedy

union ; to which the fair one " nothing loath," immediately consented.

In the humble station in which she was found by Mr. Danvers, her fiery temper had no opportunity of raging, and her extravagant pride no means of gratification. But no sooner did she abandon her knitting and her knotting, and the cares of a very scantily-furnished kitchen, for she was by turns, with her sisters, the cook of the family, than she became the " counterfeit presentment" of a fine lady. But a counterfeit ill-drawn and overcharged. She had the airs without the graces—the haughtiness without the condescension. Upon her superiors, she thrust herself as an equal ; while her inferiors she would treat with proud contempt, or undue familiarity.

Mr. Danvers was not long in making the discovery, that like

" The man of Ballen O'Crasy,"

he had taken

" A wife to make him unasy."

His whole establishment was new modelled, his servants dismissed, and his friends insulted. Years rolled on, and every one surrounded him with new perils and miseries. At home, he trembled, lest a word or a look should awaken the fury of a temper, whose very slumbers were fitful and disturbed ; and when abroad, on pleasure, or on business, he was constantly apprehensive of a sudden intrusion from his loving

spouse, whose movements were so rapid, and so little to be calculated upon, that, to her astonished husband, she seemed to possess the attribute of ubiquity.

If at any time she took an excursion to a neighbouring town, and he availed himself of the opportunity to invite a party, that he might make merry with his friends, in the midst of the entertainment, and at the moment they were drinking oblivion to all care, not a spectre-knight, with "the stony look of his beamless eyes" would appear to chill and stiffen the current of their blood, but an object, far more terrific to poor Mr. Danvers, would burst upon their fancied security, and disperse the affrighted guests; who, on such occasions, seldom stood "upon the order of their going."

A character of ludicrous timidity was thus impressed upon every individual of the family. The stoutest quailed and trembled in the presence of this Queen of Terrors; who, not contented with absolute sovereignty over her own legitimate dominions, was continually endeavouring to extend her sway, by a gossiping and malicious meddling in the affairs of others. In a very few years, she compelled her husband to change his associates a dozen times, till the toleration and the patience of two large towns, and of all the neighbouring gentry, were exhausted; and Mr. Danvers, companionable and hospitable as he had ever been, was reluctantly obliged to live in solitude, excited only, but more frequently deafened by the cataracts and waterfalls of his consort's rage and tears. At last, poor man, he died, and found that repose in the

grave, for which he had often, when living, sighed in vain. Mrs. Danvers wept on the occasion a few showers of becoming grief, mourned with all the precision of the strictest decorum, and then shone forth, through her sable weeds, like the evening star, through a dark and watery cloud. The consuming fire, that used to blaze in her eyes with all the fierceness of a tyger's fury, was hypocritically paled, for the purpose of conquest, and beamed with a soft and languishing expression upon the widowed heart of Sir George Delaval. It was irresistible, and the Baronet entered upon his "*Elysium*." This happy event he announced to his daughter in the letter which gave her the first intimation of the calumny which had grown out of the innocent circumstance of her casual parting with a gentleman in the dusk of evening.

Miss Elmer, whom she little suspected of being its author, chose to accompany her. She arrived amidst the marriage festivities, and was most graciously received by her lady mother, who, whenever she had an object to gain, could, by the softest insinuations, wind herself into the confidence of her victims. She soon drew from her daughter-in-law an explanation of the mystery which had alarmed her father, with which she expressed herself perfectly satisfied, and assured her, that she should ever find in her, not only a fond mother, but a sympathising and steady friend. "She had heard," she said, "strangely exaggerated reports of her being prone to religious melancholy. But she supposed, that they arose entirely from that hatred which the gay world felt towards real piety.

She herself had been religiously educated, and well knew the value and the power of divine principle ; and, therefore, rejoiced to learn, that an individual, in whose welfare and happiness she should henceforth take the deepest interest, possessed this highest excellence of character." In this instance, hypocrisy suited her purpose, and she accordingly put on the mask. The assassins of Cæsar *knelt* down, that they might stab him with greater certainty ; and the second Lady Delaval, who lived but to defame, and to render every body miserable around her, could whine as well as rave ; pray as well as scandalize. In some respects, she was the counterpart of Miss Elmer. They were admirably formed to work mischief together, and then to commence hostilities between themselves. Louisa was cordially hated by them both ; though different causes led to the same result. The evil always detest the good ; and there is a moral necessity why they should persecute and slander them. The ground of Miss Elmer's enmity to Miss Delaval we have seen ; that of her step-mother arose from her fear, that Sir George might love her with an affection incompatible with her designs upon him, and from her being in her power.

CHAPTER XV.

"For such goodness can I return nothing
But some hot tears that sting mine eyes? Some sighs,
That if not breath'd, would swell my heart to stifling?"

Coteridge.

TRIFLES "light as air," are sometimes magnified into affairs of great "pith and moment." Louisa Delaval was once accidentally overtaken on the King's highway by a cavalier, to whom she happened to be known, and she again met the same individual by appointment. Out of these meagre facts proceeded a full-grown, bloated calumny. The cavalier was her suitor; he was worthless; and she was about to elope with him; or, in the elegant phrase of Miss Elmer, "to throw herself away, and to disgrace her family."

It is now our province to tell the plain unvarnished tale. The traveller was De Clifford—he was passing on to a distant county without knowing that he was in the neighbourhood of Sir George Delaval's estate; his brow was clouded with care; and his business appeared to be urgent. When Louisa crossed his path, he could scarcely believe the vision to be real, and she was equally surprised when he accosted her in the language of familiar recognition. Eagerly she inquired after Mrs. Wilmington, and the Evelyns; and having received satisfactory answers, with an anxious penetrating glance, she questioned him as to the object of his present journey, and the point of his destination. He simply informed her, that his object was to serve

a dear and intimate friend of hers—that he was on his way to an estate which was once her property, but which was now lost to her for ever. “He was desirous,” he said, “of securing a few family pictures, and some other things of little intrinsic value, but which their late owner highly esteemed. That individual,” he added, “was no other than Mrs. Dormer, with whom he had been slightly acquainted during the time he had connected himself with the fashionable world, and whom he had since occasionally met in his late sojourn in town.”

The intelligence thus unexpectedly communicated, pierced the heart of Louisa, who, anxious to know all the particulars of this distressing case, and to ascertain De Clifford’s success in the generous purpose of his journey, requested that he would call upon her on his return. This he promised to do, and the interview took place in the manner we have already described.

Prior to her leaving town, Louisa was deeply grieved to witness the growing wretchedness of her once sprightly and animated friend. Sometimes, while indulging in her usual style of playful *badinage*, the tears of sorrow would steal down her cheeks, and more than once, overpowered by her feelings, she had been obliged to retire. Her gaiety excited pain, because it was no longer natural. It was too evidently a fruitless effort to conceal the wound which was festering in her stricken heart.

Even to Louisa, she never could disclose the sources of her woe, nor was it necessary;—they were seen and felt by all who knew her. For several months, she had been in that delicate

situation in which women "wish to be who love their lords," and which demands from them the most unwearied and devoted attentions. But, unhappily, the being to whom she had confided her destiny, was equally devoid of principle and feeling; he had obtained her fortune, and was perfectly different to her person. After the detection of the criminal intrigue which had endangered his worthless life, though Emily never *once upbraided him*; but was constantly at his side to soothe his pains, and to anticipate his wishes, he was utterly insensible to her kindness. For a few days, indeed, he made a fulsome parade of his gratitude, and talked as if he felt it; but the very semblance soon passed away, and again he launched forth on the ocean of dissipation; spending his days in folly, and his nights in gambling. When unsuccessful at play, he generally returned home to vent his brutal rage upon his unoffending wife. As Vice is rapidly progressive, the shades of his character deepened every day; while the gulf of ruin yawned and widened at his feet. Fortune, which had once favoured, now capriciously forsook him. Every venture was a failure; and he was constantly involving both his own estate and that which he possessed in the right of Emily. Maddened thus to desperation, he resolved to set his life upon a cast; to rise or fall for ever, by the hazard of a single die. Among those who appeared the most eager to win his money, and who generally encountered him with success, was an individual who wore a singular disguise, and who was unknown to the regular practitioners of the black and detestable

art, in the mysteries of which he seemed to be perfectly initiated. His constant attendance among them, and his indifference to every game in which Dormer was not a party, filled them all with surprise. Dormer viewed him as the dæmon of his destiny, and under the infatuation we have described, resolved to stake with him the last shilling of his fortune. The stranger accepted the challenge; and, in one fatal moment, his antagonist was hurled from comparative affluence to absolute beggary.

In an agony of despair, he hurried home;—it was morning, and he threw himself on a sofa; but a thousand dæmons seemed to haunt him. Alive to the full horror of his situation, he yet dreaded to realize it. He slumbered; and the injured form of Emily rose before him;—he awoke in dismay—he loved her not, yet he feared to meet the silent reproach of her eye, an indignant glance from which sometimes revealed to him his own contemptible nothingness. But he had only dreamed—yet the phantom must soon become real—he must meet the woman he had ruined; and, at this moment, his courage utterly failed him. He felt that he could not now resort to his usual expedient—his fierce insolence would not silence her complaints; and his Stoical apathy would not avail to mock the upbraiding of her tears. Besides, the world would espouse her cause. Yes! his own despicable associates would brand him as a villain; and how was he, penniless and friendless, to encounter the loud denunciations of an indignant world. For the first time in his life, something like thought and reflection was awa-

kened in his breast ; something between compunction and shame rankled within him. It was not penitence. It was not the anguish of a generous and noble spirit, wrecked by temptation and passion, and accusing itself with reproachful vehemence as the desperate author of its own ruin, more afflicted by its moral degradation than by all the outward misfortunes which might be the consequences of its guilt. It was rather the pusillanimous wailing of a wretch, whose wickedness was no farther a matter of regret than as it brought its own punishment with it. Wrung with these emotions, he slunk from the house which was no longer his, and left his wife to read the discovery of her wrongs in the affected condolence or the averted looks of her heartless acquaintances. The fact soon become notorious. Innumerable creditors poured in their claims. Dormer was arrested ; and every remaining vestige of his possessions doomed to the hammer. De Clifford happened to be in town when the dire calamity visited the intimate associate of Louisa, the best, the dearest friend of his departed Julia. He casually learnt Mrs. Dormer's predilection for certain articles of furniture in her distant estate, and without apprising any individual of his purpose, he took the journey we have mentioned, and happily succeeded in its object.

It was likewise, in this hour of anguish and hopeless despair, that Emily received a visit from Mrs. Dorothy Dormer, the maiden aunt of her unfeeling husband, whose Methodism and oddities, as they were termed by the world of fashion, had precluded her from the acquaintance

of her amiable relative. "She called," she said, "to entreat that her niece would accept her house as an asylum from calamity; and her friendship as its mitigation. She did not harshly blame her nephew, though she detested his vices; she pitied his misfortunes, and resolved to render him that assistance which would shield him from want; and yet withdraw him from the extravagances of the world."

With all the delicacy of good sense and good feeling, she removed from Emily every thing that might, by possibility, remind her of her new state of dependence. Every comfort she enjoyed was her own, and what she had been accustomed to; and with the meekness of heavenly wisdom, she led her mind to the only refuge of the sorrowful. Emily, never insensible to goodness, and always approving of Religion, gradually yielded to its influence. The world, in which she had figured so long, and which professed to regard her as its idol, left her to her reflections. Its brilliant tide of gaiety and fashion rolled away from her, and but for her religious and despised relative, and those who resembled her in principle, she would have been utterly abandoned to misfortune.

The moment Louisa arrived in town, she sought her friend in her new residence, and though affected to tears by the change in her situation, she yet felt, that under all the circumstances, she was entitled to congratulation rather than condolence. Emily admitted, with a sigh, that though she was less gay, she was more happy. She expected every day to sustain the most tender and endearing relation of Huma-

nity; and she hoped, that an infant's smiles would in some degree compensate a husband's infidelity; and that in the cares of a mother, she should soon learn to forget every other. Her friends were few; but they were sincere; and she dwelt with glowing and grateful eloquence on the generous and delicate kindness of De Clifford. Louisa heard her with indescribable pleasure. In the character and fate of this young man, she had long taken a peculiar interest. So fearfully had he fallen, so miserably had he suffered, and so nobly had he emerged from the darkness of Infidelity, to the brightness of the Christian course, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, that she delighted to trace his progress, and to witness the triumphs of his piety. Perhaps, other feelings existed in her heart, but of these she was at this time quite unconscious.

The affairs of Dormer were declared to be utterly desperate; and not a wreck remained for Emily; who felt that from henceforth, both herself and her infant must be indebted to the kindness of others even for subsistence. This feeling of dependence wounded her pride, and she unconsciously heaved a sigh of bitterness. It was at this sad moment that a gentleman waited upon her on business of peculiar importance; there was a mystery, an almost wildness in his manner and appearance, which Mrs. Dorothy Dormer, to whom he had introduced himself, could not understand; and she rather wished to spare her niece the inconvenience of an interview with so strange a being. But his request was peremptory. It was indispensable

that he should see the lady for whom his call was intended; he would not detain her long, and perhaps what he had to communicate, would impart satisfaction to her. He was therefore ushered into the room where Emily was seated at work. The stranger bowed, and she instantly recognized, as he approached, the Misanthrope, whose singularities had so often afforded her amusement. She at once acknowledged him as an acquaintance, and he immediately proceeded to explain the object of his visit.

"I am not a man of ceremony," he remarked, addressing the anxiously-inquisitive Emily; "Yet I come to apologize to you as the author of your recent misfortunes; though when I consider the moral benefit you have derived from them, and the advantage which you enjoy in the acquaintance they have alienated, and the friends they have procured, I know not whether an apology is necessary. I have ruined but not wronged you; and am now come to make all the reparation in my power. I have known you long—your resemblance to an angel, now in Heaven, first awakened interest in a heart which for many years had been dead to human sympathies. I saw you on the giddy and dangerous eminence of the world, and I beheld the harpies that were hovering over you to make you their prey. I resolved from the first to watch you with a parent's solicitude,—to save you if possible—and, if this should be impracticable, to mitigate the evil I could not prevent. You married Dormer. I knew him—knew him to be all that you have experienced. I

foresaw what would happen. But I have gained my object. Thank Heaven, though wrecked you are not lost, and the cargo is safe. Aware of the gambling propensities of your husband, and of his infatuation when unsuccessful at play, I have, ever since your marriage, forced myself to visit the haunts of infamy, where knaves prey upon fools, and the guileless are made the victims of the designing. My only purpose was, to arrest the arm of ruin, when it should be uplifted to crush you with its stroke. To me your husband lost the great bulk of his own fortune and of yours. And my errand this morning is to apprise you, that I have made the whole of it over to you, and so secured it, both principal and interest, that it never can be alienated. It can never again become the sport of chance. Your houses in town, your estates in the country, are all yours—your own.”

Emily, overwhelmed at this address, could only reply by a look of silent amazement, instantly succeeded by a burst of grateful feeling, not articulate; but which the stranger felt in the scalding tears that dropt in torrents on his hands, which were clasped by her with a convulsive agony of joy. It was more than he could bear, and he seized the first moment to escape.

CHAPTER XVI.

—————" Accioche tutta piena
Esperiensa d'esto giron porti
—————Or va, e vedi la lor mena."

Dante.

THE eccentric generosity of the Misanthrope, in the instance we have just narrated, was a gleam of his former character before his mind had felt the shock which had almost driven Reason from her seat. To Emily it was productive of the happiest consequences. It placed her equally beyond her husband's unkindness and extravagance, while it enabled her to make a handsome and permanent provision for his comfort. Louisa rejoiced in the returning prosperity of her friend, but was soon placed in a situation to require herself, all the sympathy of those who truly loved her.

Miss Elmer and Lady Delaval, however they differed on other points, agreed in this, that Miss Delaval was to be made unhappy; the one hoping, by constant irritation, to drive her from her principles; and the other, to force her from her home. Louisa, unaffected, generous, and without suspicion, confided every secret of her bosom to her invidious step-mother; who, till she had made herself perfect mistress of her character, hopes, and wishes, pretended cordially to enter into her views. But when she found that Innocence had nothing to disclose, and Virtue nothing to conceal, she hated the excellence she could not imitate; and resolved, by every means, to place it at a distance from her. For this pur-

pose, she united with Miss Elmer in her system of persecution against the religion of Louisa; and at last succeeded in persuading Sir George, that the respectability of his family required, on the part of his daughter, an entire renunciation of all her Beaulien friends, and of the principles which she had derived from her acquaintance with them. For a long time, the good-nature of the Baronet, and his affection for his only child, prevented his taking any very decided step to annoy her. But his indecision had all the effect of acquiescence. It armed the enemies of Louisa with all the power of his authority, which they were not reluctant to employ against her. Every comfort of her life was imbittered; but her heaviest calamity was the evident and increasing alienation of her father's heart. When he was not wrought up to reprove, he studiously shunned her. Nor would he allow her an opportunity of making Nature's powerful appeal to his almost-yielding bosom. His weakness had all the effect of remorseless cruelty; and he suffered an angel to fall the victim of a dæmon's malice. The feelings of the father were lost in the absurd uxoriousness of a foolish husband.

Louisa, sustained by the power of Religion, bore the reproaches and insults, to which she was every moment exposed, without a murmur. All her duties were performed with punctual exactness, and she treated her very persecutors with kindness. But it was impossible for a creature, delicate and sensitive as she was, and who had risen to womanhood without hearing from any one even a whisper of dissatisfaction, to

endure, without vital injury, such unwearied and cruel assaults upon her feelings. At length, a fever, the virulent effect of incessant anxiety, threatened her life. Its ravages were fearful. It was subdued with the utmost difficulty, and left her under the morbid influence of the most distressing nervous debility. Every sound terrified her; and, at the approach of Lady Delaval or Miss Elmer, she was seized with tremor and fainting. Literally worn to a skeleton, her medical attendants predicted, that if her mind was not relieved, and her strength recruited by a change of air, her recovery would be impossible. Sir George, alarmed at the danger for which he could not but severely condemn himself, determined, whatever might be the consequence, to remove her to Beaulieu; and, as there was no probability of her being able to live under the same roof with Lady Delaval, the venom and violence of whose temper and character he began to understand; he proposed to Mrs. Wilmington that she should reside with her. This was a proposal which, however it defeated the avowed object of her aunt and step-mother, was nevertheless really agreeable to them both; and, indeed, to all the parties interested. Lady Delaval acceded to it, because she would then possess uncontrolled sway over Sir George. Miss Elmer thought, that these sanctified sort of people, when they became incurable, ought to live in a world by themselves; and Mrs. Wilmington and the Evelyns hailed the return of their lovely friend with heartfelt delight. Louisa acknowledged, with tears of gratitude, the kindness of her father, and joyfully

availed herself of the asylum which he had provided for her.

During her late illness, and the trials which occasioned it, she had brought her religious principles to the test—she had looked the King of Terrors in the face without dismay, and though Jordan rolled its awful tide at her feet, she believed that she could plunge unhurt into the flood—

“Through the dear might of Him who trod the waves.”

And now, though an exile from her paternal home, abandoned and disowned by those who were bound to cherish and protect her, she was unsubdued. She rejoiced, that her happiness could not be impaired by any thing adventitious—that it was identified with her being. She was not insensible to the cruel imbecility of her father, which gave her up to be the victim of the base injustice and malignity of her persecutors; but she had a Father in Heaven, whose mercy soothed her anguish, and whose favour was better than life. She belonged to the family of the Just; and in her Redeemer centered every relation essential to her present peace and future felicity.

When she appeared at Beaulieu, the shadow of her former self, her kind friends were shocked at the change. But, when they regarded it as the triumph of principle over the dearest and mightiest ties of mortal existence, they beheld her with admiration. Many weeks passed before she could take the air, except in a carriage, without the supporting arm of

Mrs. Wilmington. De Clifford would often accompany them in their walks; open and place the camp-chair for the invalid; and cheer the hours of languor by reading to her the finest passages, whether of poetry or prose, with which his daily studies furnished him. As Louisa recovered her strength, she took an increasing interest in the scene of moral culture around her, which the industry and piety of her friends had created. The work commenced by Julia was rapidly advancing, and its beneficial results were every where apparent. De Clifford was the main-spring of the whole. He had abandoned the law as a profession, and was studying for the Church, and his leisure moments were thus spent in works of charity.

Mrs. Wilmington was no match-maker. She detested the very name; yet did she indulge a latent wish, that the two beings, in whose welfare she took the deepest interest, might, as their characters and pursuits assimilated, form a mutual attachment. Not that she considered marriage as one of the ends of life, or as even necessary to usefulness and happiness. She regarded it, in the light of Christianity; as a union designed by Providence to sweeten the cares of the present state, to heighten its pleasures, and to augment our means and opportunities of doing good.

Both De Clifford and Louisa were placed in circumstances in which they could form a just estimate of each other; and where the excellencies of each were likely to produce a favourable impression. A process of this nature, unknown to themselves, had been long operat-

ing on their hearts ; and the fact was at last disclosed in a scene of peculiar and affecting interest.

The venerable pastor of Beaulieu—the aged pilgrim of immortality, after many years of devotedness to the duties of his sacred office, was drawing near the end of his sojourn upon earth. With a calm and holy dignity he appeared ready to lay down his staff. Having reached the shrine ;—the portals of the heavenly temple opened and disclosed to his enraptured view a prospect of glory ineffable. At the sublime spectacle Hope beamed in his eye, and Joy diffused its warm pulsation through his aged frame, chilled as it was with the winter of years. “Come up hither,” said the voice from above the high altar of eternal praise.—“I come—I have finished my course—I have kept the Faith,” was the humble yet firm reply, “Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

Sensible of his approaching dissolution, Mr. Evelyn summoned around his bed the friends and companions of his Christian journey. He spoke of his departure as an event which they must have long anticipated, and which he had waited for as “the end of his faith,” the salvation of his soul—Turning to De Clifford, he affectionately addressed him, “I have said,” he remarked, “a great deal to you, my Edward, on the evidences and the importance of the Christian Religion ; and I now solemnly repeat with the emphasis of dying confidence, that it is all true. I have preached the truth I believe ; and now it is not mere belief—it is certain knowledge, It is assurance ;—my conviction

and my soul are identified. The Master I have so imperfectly served loves me, and I am now leaning on his bosom; beneath me are the everlasting arms. A moment will disclose to me eternity; and in that moment I shall know more than has ever been known upon earth, or than ever will be known, till the consummation of all things."

To Louisa, he said, "Ah! my daughter, glad I am to embrace you. Hold fast the profession of your faith to the end. As Jacob blessed his children, so I bless you." As he uttered these words he grasped the hands of De Clifford and Louisa. They both wept. Then in a strain of holy fervour, and with a brightness on his countenance, which seemed to unite death and immortality in one strange embrace, he poured forth the most sublime strains of supplication and praise—his voice faltered—and whispering an indistinct "Amen!" he expired!

From that moment De Clifford and Louisa felt that they were never to separate upon earth till the final scene; which they mentally prayed might resemble what they had just witnessed.

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